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# LIBERALISM, MODERNISM AND TRADITION

# LIBERALISM, MODERNISM AND TRADITION

*Bishop Paddock Lectures, 1922*

BY

OLIVER CHASE QUICK

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TO

HUGH RICHARD LAWRIE SHEPPARD

IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF FOURTEEN
YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP AND ONE YEAR
OF ASSOCIATION IN HIS WORK AT
ST. MARTIN'S-IN-THE-FIELDS

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# PREFACE

I SHOULD like to take this opportunity of offering my warmest thanks to my friends the Dean and the professorial staff of the General Theological Seminary, New York, both for their exceedingly kind hospitality during a visit of which I cherish many pleasant memories, and for various criticisms and suggestions of which they may perhaps be able to see some result in these pages. Otherwise the Lectures are printed almost exactly in the same form as they were delivered.

Perhaps I ought at the same time to emphasize the exceedingly tentative character of any suggestions I have been able to make towards the construction of a modern orthodox Christology. I have endeavoured to define the essential values which such a Christology must preserve, rather than even to indicate any theory which would be capable of preserving them. It seems clear that new theory is needed. But first should come preparatory study which sketches the limits within which it must work, and elicits the essential content of the Christian experience which it must work with. Insufficient preparation of this kind seems to be the cause of the really unorthodox

element in modernism. All theology is fundamentally orthodox, which is built upon the Christian experience of God through Christ. But it must be an initial postulate that that experience, personal as it may and ought to be, is not a matter of merely private or subjective interpretation. We must therefore make clear some measure of agreement as to the immediate empirical meaning, which is also the limitation, of Christianity, before we can expect our Christologies to expand it by their mediation. Modernism, where it is unorthodox, is not unorthodox because it restates Christianity, but because it states something which is not Christian—and such statement is by no means peculiar to the school of churchmanship called modernist. But what is Christianity? That is the first question. What I have chiefly sought to do, is neither to restate nor state any Christology, but to define the empirical data of Christianity from which all Christologies should start.

Finally, I am aware that my use of the terms "Liberal Protestantism" and "Modernism" may be criticized as arbitrary, and I am willing to plead guilty to the charge. But I hope I have sufficiently explained what I mean by the terms to prevent misunderstanding. I could not find any other labels which would suit my purpose better.

OLIVER C. QUICK.

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# LIBERALISM, MODERNISM AND TRADITION

## BISHOP PADDOCK LECTURES, 1922

### I. LIBERAL PROTESTANTISM

THE modernity of all modern theology is the characteristic result of the introduction of modern scientific method into religion. And it is a very fair description of that method to say that it consists in a systematic attempt to analyse human experience into facts and beliefs, and to avoid confusion between those two constituent elements of our knowledge. Thus modern Christologies really date from the application of the so-called higher criticism to the New Testament. Herein lies the one essential difference between the Christological problem of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and that of the third and fourth. The modern problem starts from the endeavour to distinguish the actual facts connected with the origin of Christianity from the beliefs, theories, opinions and valuations with which from the beginning men's minds have surrounded and overlaid them.

Now it is obvious that beliefs, however erroneous

and untrue, are themselves facts, in so far as they have actually been held by actual men. Hence the effort of the critical historian of Christianity in distinguishing facts from beliefs is really to distinguish between two classes of facts; on the one hand the actual events which were the origin of Christianity, and on the other hand the progressive interpretation or valuation of those facts, which has determined the subsequent development of the Christian Church. Traditional orthodoxy had, of course, always admitted the existence of some such two elements in Christian truth. It found the original facts in the Bible, and the essentials of subsequent interpretation in dogma, and it taught that the latter were wholly justified by the former, so that the faith consisted in an indissoluble harmony of certain historic facts with certain beliefs about them, which beliefs were themselves not only facts but truths. But the first act of the critics was to make a new analysis of these two sets of facts. Broadly speaking, they assigned a considerably smaller proportion to the first class and a considerably larger proportion to the second. A great deal that tradition had classed as original fact the critics classed as the product of subsequent belief. A typical instance of this is to be found in the treatment of the fourth gospel, where few critics would admit that the words recorded as spoken by Jesus are verbatim reports of what He actually said.

This fresh analysis immediately raised the question whether the original facts thus modified could be said in the same way to justify the subsequent beliefs or doctrines as orthodoxy had always maintained. Must not the fresh analysis lead to a radically fresh synthesis also?

Now, assuming that the original facts no longer justified the subsequent beliefs, and that a new kind of synthesis was necessary, there were two possible lines along which it might be attempted.

(1) On the one hand it was possible to exalt the value and importance of the original facts as now modified by criticism, to maintain that in them is the essence of Christianity, and to disparage and discount subsequent doctrines, which they do not seem to justify, as errors, mythological accretions, partial degradations of the pure gospel, which, though natural enough and even useful in primitive times, must now be discarded.

(2) On the other hand it was possible to attach primary value and importance to the ideas underlying the developments of doctrine, to point out the error of confusing origin with validity, to seek a basis for the validity of these ideas independent of the alleged facts on which they had been thought to rest, and to find the essential truth of Christianity in their continuous growth and expansion in the minds of men.

During the past eighty years each of these types of new synthesis has been attempted, and each

has given rise to one of the two most important and widely diffused schools of modernised Christianity. The first type is roughly that of Liberal Protestantism, the second that of Catholic Modernism, or, as it might perhaps be called, Evolutionary Modernism, since its essential principle is often found among those who have no external connection with Catholicism. Each type has, of course, appealed to different minds in accordance with their different temperaments and circumstances. The first, which seems to lay its main stress on a few plain facts and on the life of a particular man and his teaching, naturally finds most adherents among those of a somewhat matter-of-fact, moralistic, unmystical and unmetaphysical temperament; while the second, with its wider range but less tangible content, is more naturally congenial to those who move easily in the realm of large and general ideas, or place more exclusive reliance on the inward experiences of the spirit. Perhaps that is why Liberal Protestantism has penetrated furthest among those of Teutonic and Anglo-Saxon race, while the home of Catholic Modernism is among the Latins and the Celts. But such generalisations as these are so disputable and subject to so many exceptions that they are hardly worth making.

Liberal Protestantism is our subject in this lecture. Its watchword has been "Back to the historical Jesus." Catholic dogma and theology is

for it a metaphysical complication which obscures the simplicity of the gospel as taught by Jesus. Its Bible within the Bible is really the synoptic gospels, though Lutheran exponents have naturally joined with them their own version of the teaching of St. Paul.

Ritschl is in Christology the actual pioneer of this school of thought, which was developed along different lines by Harnack and Herrmann, and has still a very preponderating influence on English Liberalism. At last year's Conference of the Modern Churchmen's Union, held at Girton, at least three-quarters of the papers were distinctly of a Ritschlian and Liberal Protestant type.

In dealing with the philosophic aspect of Ritschlianism, it is important to note its original connection with realism in philosophy. For however much some Ritschlian theologians may profess themselves idealists or Kantians in epistemology, it is not realism merely but naïf uncritical realism which harmonises best with their enormous emphasis on the particular historic facts concerning Jesus, and can alone justify their wholesale disparagement of metaphysical theology. There is an element of naïf realism, the plain man's attitude to plain facts, running all through Ritschlian Christology.

True, Ritschl himself never deals with the facts concerning Jesus as pure history, but only as organic to the religious essence and value of Christianity, in which he includes the Church. But

his Christology is at bottom realistic. He starts by distinguishing three theories of knowledge:[1]

(1) The first, Plato's, sharply distinguishes the object of real knowledge, or thing-in-itself, from its appearances or effects in ordinary experience, and declares that the thing-in-itself is the only reality, its appearances being mere illusory phenomena.

(2) The second, Kant's, makes the same distinction between the thing-in-itself and the appearances, but insists that these appearances are all that can be known, and are therefore the objects of all the knowledge we can get. Real reality is hidden from us altogether.

(3) The third, Lotze's, refuses thus to separate the thing from its appearances, and declares that the real reality is indeed known in and through its effects upon us in ordinary experience.

This third doctrine Ritschl immediately accepts (though, as Dr. Garvie points out, it is not an epistemology at all, but just a rough statement of the epistemological problem[2]), and he proceeds to make it the philosophical basis for a sweeping attack on the traditional dogma of the two natures in Christ. The dogma, Ritschl seems to suggest, is wrong because its source is in Platonism. The Church has practically equated Christ's human nature with the mere illusory, phenomenal appearance, and His Divine nature with the real real-

[1] *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, pp. 18–20.

[2] *The Ritschlian Theology*, 2nd edition, pp. 45–47.

ity, the Christ-in-Himself. Hence, according to Ritschl's account of Catholicism, the real Divine Christ cannot be really known through His appearance in the man Jesus, and can only be reached in some form of mystical experience which gets behind all outward facts and phenomena, corresponding to Plato's semi-mystical dialectic which finally removes and discards all sense-impressions to find the true idea.[1] Here we note the philosophical ground for the Ritschlians' dislike of Catholic mysticism. To them it is always the attempt to get behind the humanity of Jesus Christ. When the mystic has "found God," Herrmann tells us, he has "left Christ behind."[2]

The crime, then, of Western orthodoxy in Ritschl's eyes was that it conceived the Godhead as an eternal immutable something which could not be known except mystically, and so could not be brought into relation with the manhood of Jesus except by the bare assertion that the two natures were somehow together in Him. But, as Ritschl went on to observe with considerable acuteness, the very insistence on the Godhead of Christ as the one true reality of His Person had the result, according to Platonic principles, that only His manhood could appear and be felt in all that concerns practical religious experience apart from the mystic's vision. Thus it happens that mediæval theories of Christ's merits and of His

[1] Cf. Ritschl, *op. cit.*, pp. 20–23 and 497.
[2] *Communion of the Christian with God,* p. 30.

sacrifice on the Cross and in the Mass represent Him only as man, as far as their practical significance is concerned. In metaphysical theory God only, in practical religion man only,—so Ritschl sums up and condemns the outcome of Western orthodox teaching about our Lord's Person. The older Eastern teaching based on the formula, "He became human that we might become divine," Ritschl by comparison approves, because it at least brings the Godhead of our Lord into effective connection with human life, and makes the explanation of Christian experience the chief aim of its Christology.[1]

But Ritschl himself rejected the whole metaphysical theory of two natures in Christ. What then was his alternative? He professed to base himself on Lotze's theory of knowledge, but in reality he threw philosophy overboard altogether. He tried to get back to the practical facts about the man Jesus, His life and teaching, and to reconstruct this human basis in such a manner that it could by itself bear the whole weight of the doctrine of Christ's Divinity in any sense in which it could be legitimately demanded by Christian experience. Struggling away from the vicious separation between the Divine Christ-in-Himself and the human Christ-as-He-appears-to-men, he grounded his doctrine on the man Jesus as the Supreme Revealer of God. So the real Christ-in-Himself is the man, and on His man-

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 389–391.

hood must rest any dogma of His Divinity which we may be led to superimpose. Thus it is that the Liberal Protestants who follow Ritschl still build their Christologies on the human moral excellence and God-revealing quality of Jesus, and still ally themselves exclusively with that school of historical criticism which finds genuineness in the accounts of our Lord's moral teaching and goodness, while it tends to explain away or to consider as interpolation those passages in which He appears to make supernatural claims.

Nevertheless Liberal Protestants on the whole do not at all wish to discard the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity altogether, and the attempts to reinterpret it and restore it in a new form have followed on the whole two distinct lines. The starting-points of both can be clearly traced in Ritschl's difficult chapter on the Doctrine of the Person and Life-work of Jesus Christ.

(1) The first is that mainly followed out by Harnack, and further by that school of thought in England, of which I might take Dr. Rashdall[1] as chief representative. This school has insisted nobly on the marvellous depth and truth and originality of our Lord's teaching about the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men as His children, and has gone on to show how Jesus Himself was in a unique way the living example and embodiment of this His own teaching. He was conscious of His Sonship and lived out

[1] Not, of course, Ritschlian in his attitude to metaphysics.

His Sonship in a way no other man has done. But to affirm this is to affirm already a very close and, in a sense, a unique relation between Jesus and God. Are we not then justified in calling uniquely Divine a man who so uniquely and finally expressed and interpreted God to us?

Now, however much we may be attracted by this line of argument, it is obviously very difficult to find anything in it to which a Unitarian could in principle object. Dr. Rashdall indeed, in a very lucid and persuasive paper addressed to the Girton Conference,[1] declared his full belief that on such grounds we were right to maintain that the Divine Logos was finally and uniquely united with the manhood of Jesus, but only apparently after the same mode in which the Logos is partially and imperfectly united with all good men. It is a little difficult to see what precise content of meaning is to be assigned by this doctrine to the words "through Jesus Christ our Lord," so as to justify the position they hold in Christian prayer and experience. The centrality of the Person of Jesus seems inevitably somewhat disturbed.

(2) The other line of argument for the Divinity of our Lord suggested by Ritschl has been worked out in different ways by such very diverse writers as W. Herrmann, Dr. T. R. Glover and Prof. Bethune-Baker. Let us start with Jesus as a supremely good man and true teacher; we shall immediately find that Christian experience shows

[1] Published in *The Modern Churchman*, Sept. 1921.

Him to be more. Think of the effect this man has had on men. Think of His value in human life. Dogmas and doctrines about His Person may be false and unworthy,—they may have obscured the Saviour they were meant to glorify. But they stand for something. The very controversy they excited shows that men knew that something vital was at stake. No mere man could have meant and represented what Jesus has meant and represented in the hearts of Christians. Should we not use and use truly the name God to express that which Jesus in experience has shown Himself to be? There is no need to confuse and complicate an affirmative answer with any strange metaphysical doctrines. Those who like and understand such doctrines may hold them, but at least do not let us bind them as burdens on the backs of others. Here are the facts. Why should we not express our plain sense of them by calling Jesus Divine? Will any other name do?

No sincere Christian will question the argument's power. Rightly handled it is perhaps the most effective and enduring weapon in the armoury of the Christian apologist. But we are bound to examine the results it gives when it is considered strictly as constituting a Christology.

This is the type of Christology which is really indicated by the celebrated Ritschlian doctrine of value-judgments. In drawing a rigid distinction between a value-judgment of religion and the judgments of scientific truth proper to the secular

intellect, Ritschl was in reality making a rather clumsy but much-needed protest against all attempts to disparage or explain away the fact of the meaning of Christ's life for the religious consciousness of Christians. It was one of his chief merits as a theologian that he saw so clearly that it is impossible to give any true account of the Person of Jesus which does not explain what that Person had meant and still means to Christ's followers. He was thus at times led into the exaggeration of declaring that the fact of this value of Jesus for men is itself a Christology.

When we compare this type of Christology with that of the Western tradition which Ritschl condemned, we notice at once that the Godhead and manhood in our Lord's Person have, so to speak, changed places. According to tradition, the Godhead is as it were the primary and basic reality, the manhood the appearance, effect or relation of the Godhead towards us and our human experience. According to Ritschl's value-theory this order is exactly reversed. The primary basic reality from which we start is the man Jesus, man so far and nothing more; His relation towards other men, His effect and power upon them, is what we call His Godhead. In considering the effect of this Christology, I am irresistibly reminded of the old distinction drawn by Locke between primary and secondary qualities in material objects. A primary quality, like size or extension in space, seems to exist altogether in

the object quite independently of your perception of it. A secondary quality, like colour, seems to belong to the object too, but yet to depend to some extent also on the seeing eye. It is difficult to maintain either that colour is independent of sight or that it is wholly created by seeing, so that the natural conclusion is that the colour is an effect produced by the seen object on the eye. So we might not unfairly say that, for Ritschl, the manhood is related to the Godhead in our Lord in something the same way as a primary to a secondary quality. The Godhead is, as it were, the effect of the manhood upon us. And faith, whereby alone, according to him, we are able to know and prove the Godhead, is like the colour vision which enables those who have it to perceive and distinguish colours.

By this rough analogy we are enabled at once to see the unfairness of two objections which have often been urged against the Ritschlian value-Christology.[1] It has been accused (1) of making the Godhead of our Lord unreal in fact, and treating it as simply a subjective valuation of His life in our minds, and (2) of producing an epistemological dualism with two faculties, faith and knowledge, over against two objects, value and scientific fact, which dualism it has made no attempt to reconcile. Neither of these objections is sound. We do not say that our colour vision

[1] These objections are clearly stated and met by Dr. Garvie, *op. cit.*, pp. 186–191.

is purely subjective, merely because colour is not wholly independent of our seeing it. Neither do we create a hopeless dualism in our faculties because we admit that some men are colour-blind and cannot perceive colour at all. Without faith a man is in Ritschl's view debarred from a certain kind of knowledge, just as a colour-blind man is debarred from a certain kind of perception.

But this value-Christology of Ritschlianism has other difficulties to face. How precisely is this Godhead, which looks like a quality or effect of the manhood of Jesus in relation to ours, related to the Godhead of Him Whom Jesus taught us to call Our Father? If Jesus Christ really does produce this wonderful effect in the lives of believers, which entitles us to call Him God, must we not go on to assert that He is and always was eternally and metaphysically God, *i. e.* in some sense identical and consubstantial even with the Father Himself? Ritschlianism was debarred from answering Yes, because the affirmation would have brought back the whole philosophic puzzle of the two natures which it believed itself to have got rid of once for all.[1] Its only safety lay in absolutely refusing to define the Deity of Christ further, or else in taking refuge in some of the dialectical subterfuges which pragmatism is always ready to provide. Ritschlians of this

[1] Ritschl himself seemed to think he answered the question by affirming an identity between the "self-end" of the man Jesus and that of God; cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 450, 451.

school seem necessarily unable to face the difficulty of this question squarely, and at times it even seems to be haunting their sub-conscious minds like a suppressed complex, causing strange negations or dogmatisms which would be inexplicable save for its presence.

One striking result of this in some German and English Liberals has been an attempt to limit altogether too rigorously the revelation of God to the man Jesus Christ. It seems as if they were trying to make up for the loss of His metaphysical Godhead by isolating Him altogether from other men as the human revealer of God. Thus Herrmann so closely confines the revelation of God to Him that even communion with the Risen Christ seems to be restricted to what can be learned from the historic life of Jesus.[1] In his extraordinarily devout and beautiful *Communion of the Christian with God,* he seems at times to be almost torturing himself with dialectics in order to show how Jesus may justly be called God without being other in nature than a man. But he cannot get further than laying it down dogmatically that God communes with us in and through the historic Jesus alone, and that faith, not metaphysics, must prove the doctrine. In England, Prof. Bethune-Baker tells us that "it may be an overstatement of the facts to say that the Christian

[1] Cf. Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 432: "It is necessary . . . that Christ's activity *in statu exaltationis* be conceived as the expression of the abiding influence of His historical manifestation."

knows nothing of God apart from Jesus," but "it is with Jesus that his Christian faith in God begins," and "of Christian theology the centre is not God but Jesus." And the Jesus from Whom our thought must begin is man only. "To-day, when in every department of investigation we begin with the relatively known and reason from what we find there to the unknown, it is Jesus as Man in His life in the world that we want to take as our starting-point once again—as at the outset He was." "We know He was human, we believe He was also Divine." [1] Similarly, Dr. T. R. Glover characteristically asserts, "For us, apart from Jesus, God is little better than an abstract noun. . . . Let us put it in this way. If we spoke straight out, we should say that God could not do better than follow the example of Jesus. That means that Jesus fulfils our conception of God." [2] There is a strong tendency among the younger Liberals of the Student Movement to emphasise the isolation of Jesus by disparaging not only the whole of Catholic dogma which followed His life, but the whole Old Testament revelation which prepared the way for it. A competent observer has said that the four gospels are the only Bible which large numbers of the younger generation of Christians care about.[3]

Thus in marked contrast with the Christology

[1] *Faith of the Apostles' Creed*, pp. 41, 42, and *The Modern Churchman*, Sept. 1921, pp. 287, 288.

[2] *Jesus in the Experience of Men*, p. 16.

[3] Dr. A. H. Gray in *The Challenge*, May 27, 1921.

of Harnack and Rashdall, which seems rather to impair the centrality of the Person of Jesus in Christian faith, we find another type of Liberal Protestantism which emphasises that centrality in too exclusive a fashion. Indeed the need of being "Christo-centric" in theology has become almost a catchword in certain circles, and may have a connotation far less healthy than its sound might seem to imply.

For indeed this tendency to find all Godhead in the man Jesus alone, and in the man Jesus simply as man, leads us to the brink of very subversive conclusions if we press its logic to the end. What if we round off the theory by asking, What after all do we mean by Godhead more than the ideal goodness of a man? What if we were to take as serious theology that poetic hyperbole of the great modernist-before-his-time, William Blake, when he wrote, "Thou art a man, God is no more"? We should find our conclusions harmonising well with many movements in recent philosophy and science, if we were to permit ourselves to substitute for the historic faith some atheistic Jesuolatry of this kind. It is always easy, and it is often popular in modern as it was in ancient times, to substitute a man deified or treated as God for God made man in Christ, though what could be further from the mind of Jesus it is difficult to imagine. And although I know the intentions of the writers are not at all to suggest anything of this kind, I cannot help feeling very

uncomfortable when I read such passages as these set down by competent theologians in exposition of the Incarnation. "Man's true nature is not alien from God's: nay, they are one *and the same.*" [1] Or again, "The modern Churchman differs from the Chalcedonian Fathers by holding that the substances of the Deity and of the Humanity are *not two*, but one." [2] Whither does such logic tend?

The fact is that Ritschlian Christology can only excuse us for treating our Lord as God on the ground of His goodness: it cannot justify us in affirming that He is God on the ground of His being, unless it proceeds further to assert that all Godhead is but a quality of man. Or perhaps the criticism might be better expressed thus. Ritschlian Christology inevitably tends either towards Unitarianism or to what we called Jesuolatry. In its more Unitarian form it justifies us in affirming that Jesus was God, since the Logos was united with Him, but it does not justify us in treating Him as God, since all good men have the same kind of relation to God that He had; hence we cannot worship Him as one different in kind from ourselves. When it passes into Jesuolatry it justifies us in treating Jesus as God on the ground of His infinite excellence over all other men; but it cannot justify us in affirming

[1] C. H. S. Matthews in *Faith and Freedom*, p. 136. (Italics mine.)
[2] H. D. A. Major, *The Modern Churchman*, Sept. 1921, p. 196. (Italics mine.)

that He *was and is* God, unless it reduces Godhead altogether to a quality of manhood.

In any case Ritschl's main idea, that of deriving the Deity of our Lord from the goodness and value in experience of His historic manhood, has had a long trial, and may now fairly be said to have been found wanting. No process of dialectic can conjure Godhead out of a mere man. So Liberal Protestantism must either be content to use faith to screen the confusion of its logic, or, if it pursues a logical development, it must lead either towards Unitarianism on the one hand, or to mere Jesu-olatry on the other. This last result would be the most subversive of all, as it appears to be the most likely to gain popular favour, were it not for the fact that those who seem to recommend it are as a rule so entirely blind to its intellectual implications. They often seem to find no contradiction between implicitly denying the existence of any real Personal Godhead in theology, and all the while living and praying by the simplest faith in a Heavenly Father. Indeed it seems that many who pass for extreme Liberals or even sceptics in theology, are in reality so profoundly conservative in the fundamentals of belief that they simply do not see the need of any intellectual justification for what, as they think, all men of good-will necessarily accept as a religious axiom.

Nevertheless, in spite of all criticisms, it remains true that the Liberal Protestantism derived from Ritschl has done enormously good service in the

cause of modern Christianity, and that mainly perhaps for three reasons:

(1) Its apparent rejection of all metaphysical subtleties and abstruse mysticism, its plain emphasis on moral requirements and the example of a man whose life and teaching are recorded facts, all this has proved very attractive and genuinely helpful to the plain man. There is a genuinely pastoral fervour in all the great theologians of this school, a longing to present Christianity in a way which will make its power available to the average civilised man in the modern street, who is repelled by what seems to him over-subtle and remote from experience, and whose conscience is of a broadly moral rather than of a mystically religious type. And this pastoral fervour has certainly not been in vain. After all, if you can induce a man seriously to accept and to follow the teaching and example of Jesus as presented, say, by Harnack or T. R. Glover, he will not go far wrong, however inadequate his theology may be. He is far more likely to go wrong if he is encouraged by a nominal orthodoxy to believe in the Deity of our Lord in such a way that the imperative need to follow in the footsteps of His manhood tends to be overlooked.

(2) Ritschl himself performed a service to religion which it is hard to over-estimate when he recalled men's minds to the truth that a Christology must in the end be tested by its power to account for, to stimulate, and to direct the

spiritual experience of the Christian soul. Ritschl was one of the first in modern times to see clearly that the doctrine of Christ's Person is not a mere speculative dogma to be accepted as true on the authority of a Divine revelation entrusted once for all to the Church; it is a human attempt, divinely inspired as it may be, to express what is involved in that communion and fellowship with God into which believers know themselves to have been admitted through Jesus Christ their Lord. Such was the fundamental truth underlying the difficult theory of value-judgments, and the attempt to discredit all speculative and metaphysical theology. "We must bring Christ into relation to His people before we are in a position to recognise that in His own order He is unique." [1] What has chiefly prevented Ritschl's perception of this truth from bearing full fruit among his followers is the ruinous attempt to bring back the doctrine of our Lord's Deity by isolating the Jesus of the synoptic gospels, and not rather by emphasising the continuity of His life in the Risen Christ of the Church, as St. John and St. Paul teach us to do.

(3) On the other hand, even this wrong-headed attempt to limit God, as it were, to the historic Jesus, has helped to restore to us one vital truth of the Incarnation, which orthodox tradition had almost lost, viz. the truth that our Lord was never more characteristically God than when He

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 465.

suffered on the Cross, that the Cross is in the heart of God, or is the expression of God's own nature to men. Ritschl was quite right in pointing out that from early days Western orthodoxy especially had tended to separate our Lord's manhood from His Godhead, and then simply to place them as it were side by side in His Person without effectively combining them at all, so that the things which He did and suffered as man did not really belong to the Divine nature. Thus the Godhead was relegated into the sphere of the mysterious, the unknowable, and it was thought impious to affirm that God suffered on the Cross: the correct formula was held to be that He who was also God suffered in His manhood only. "Go back to the man Jesus and in Him see God," said the Ritschlians, and in this they led the way to the greatest re-discovery of modern theologians, viz. that the Cross is in literal truth the love, wisdom and power of God Himself. No longer do we think of the power and love of God as two separate and different means and methods of His action. His almighty power is itself and characteristically the power of the love which suffers and wins, not that weaker and illusory power of force which can only compel. Liberal Protestantism has played a noble part in this reformation of the faith, which comes perhaps to its fullest expression in the work of Dr. du Bose. "The hesitation and reluctance to see all God and highest God not only in the humanity but in the

deepest humiliation of Jesus Christ, is part of the disposition to measure exaltation by outward circumstance and condition, instead of inward quality and character." "Where before Christ, or where otherwise now than in Christ and in the Cross of the Divine suffering together with and for man, where in all the story of the universe was or is love so love, or God so God?" [1]

[1] Du Bose, *The Gospel in the Gospels*, pp. 273, 284. Both passages quoted by Sanday, *Life of Christ in Recent Research*, pp. 277, 278.

## II. CATHOLIC AND EVOLUTIONARY MODERNISM

I WILL begin this lecture by quoting two general criticisms of the type of theology we have been so far considering, the one from an Italian philosopher of the neo-idealist school, the other from an English theologian of the extremest Left. "Protestant theology," says Ruggiero, "is by nature inherently anti-historical. Its basic principles remain as they were fixed by Luther, the revealed word and the inner faith. Everything else is excluded, all the religious experience of the ages is rejected. The believer ought to approach the Gospel alone with his faith." [1] "The weakness," says Prof. Foakes Jackson, "of this type of Liberal Christianity appears to me to be that it is unhistorical. It does not take account of the fact that the Christian religion is a living organism which has been subject to the law of growth and development, and that every step in its progress is the logical consequence of what is gone before." [2]

It is interesting and at first sight paradoxical that the type of Liberalism which has laid most stress on the absolute importance of the historical

[1] *Modern Philosophy*, p. 90.
[2] *The Modern Churchman*, Sept. 1921, p. 230.

facts concerning the teaching and life of Jesus should itself be mainly accused of neglecting history. The paradox, however, is not difficult to explain. It seems that history as such possesses two different kinds of value for religion; there is, on the one hand, the value of objective givenness or independent reality in the certain particular facts which history establishes, and there is, on the other, the value of the general law of growth and development in nature and human institutions which history as a whole exemplifies. There is the value of the particular fact standing established above time the same forever, because it *did* happen thus, and there is the value of the continuous growth and change which go on all the time, bringing new facts with them, and of which time is the very stuff. History may be made to emphasise either of these two values, that of the particular fact or that of the continuous growth, and if Liberal Protestantism has drawn out the first of these values, it certainly seems to have neglected the second.

Liberal Protestantism has condemned in principle the main evolution of the Christian religion during the nineteen centuries it has existed in the historic world. Writers so radically different as Prof. Harnack, Dr. Rashdall and Dr. T. R. Glover have this in common, that in their view true Christianity consists in reconstructing the actual historic facts of the life and teaching of Jesus, and in the individual's approach to those

facts. The facts and the individual's faith which sees in them a gospel, these are the only abiding essentials of Christianity; these remain the same, a distinguishable substratum below all the passing systems of theology and ecclesiastical order, which are at best like husks preserving a kernel, at worst like grubs which eat into its heart. Hence the paradox of Liberal Protestantism. One of its main inspirations was its passion for real concrete fact. It desired above all to give its religion a firm basis on such undisputed fact, however much it might have to cut down orthodoxy in the process. Yet in result its religion has been chiefly accused of being abstract, doctrinaire and coldly formal. For unfortunately a substratum always turns out to be an abstraction. Just as the universal horse reached by stripping off the peculiarities of particular horses is abstract, so a universal Christianity reached by stripping off the peculiarities of the different forms in which it has been manifested is abstract. And however much the brilliant historical imagination of Dr. Glover may disguise the fact, his historic Jesus as the one source of Christianity is abstract no less surely than the metaphysics of the Athanasian Creed. The popular English Liberalism of to-day, so ably represented by the apostles of the Student Movement, seems strangely unaware that its whole point of view and method in theology have been effectively challenged not by the orthodoxy which it counts it a merit to despise, but by the

opposite wing of modernism which it finds it convenient to disregard.

In this lecture, then, we have to deal with this opposite wing of Modernism, the starting-point of which we indicated at the beginning of the first. Its fundamental principle is to find the essence of Christianity in the development of its doctrine, not in the particular facts which were its origin. It is a paradox of history, and a testimony to an amazing genius, that this school should find its true intellectual father in the great theological reactionary who was already an old man before Ritschl's work was published. It is a plain fact that Newman's *Essay on the Development of Doctrine* is to-day in many ways more characteristically modern than anything which Liberal Protestantism has produced. The permanent importance of the work, as Tyrrell saw,[1] lies in this, that in order to justify the changes which Catholicism generally has introduced into the primitive faith and practice of Christianity, Newman treated Christianity itself from the human side as essentially a tremendous idea, living, growing, evolving itself in history, always being variously applied and elucidated in human thought and life. The most celebrated passage in the whole book is so wonderfully modern in tone and has proved so epoch-making in its effects that I may perhaps be forgiven for quoting it at length.

" It is sometimes said that the stream is clearest

[1] *Christianity at the Cross Roads*, Chap. V.

near the spring. Whatever use may fairly be made of this image, it does not apply to the history of a philosophy or a belief which, on the contrary, is more equable, and purer, and stronger when its bed has become deep, and broad, and full. It necessarily rises out of an existing state of things, and for a time savours of the soil. Its vital element needs disengaging from what is foreign and temporary, and is employed in efforts after freedom which become more vigorous and hopeful as its years increase. Its beginnings are no measure of its capabilities, nor of its scope. At first no one knows what it is, or what it is worth. It remains perhaps for a time quiescent; it tries, as it were, its limbs and proves the ground under it, and feels its way. From time to time it makes essays which fail, and are in consequence abandoned. It seems in suspense which way to go; it wavers and at length strikes out in one definite direction. In time it enters upon strange territory; points of controversy alter their bearing; parties rise and fall around it; dangers and hopes appear in new relations; and old principles reappear in new forms. It changes with them in order to remain the same. In a higher world it is otherwise, but here below to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often." [1]

Here we have sketched in a piece of masterly English prose the opposite principle to that for

[1] *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, Chap. I. § 7.

which Protestantism, Liberal and Conservative, has always stood. Careful examination seems to reveal a clash with Protestantism at three distinct points.

(1) Idea is opposed to fact as the basis of Christianity. This appears more clearly when the rest of Newman's section on the Process of Development of Ideas is studied. In contradistinction to the essentially realistic basis in the bare facts of our Lord's life and teaching which Protestant criticism sought, Newman here suggests an idealistic basis in the thoughts of men.

(2) Development is opposed to origin as the essence of Christianity. This antithesis stands out with luminous clearness from Newman's passage just quoted. The Christian religion is not just the original historical revelation bearing Atlas-like upon its shoulders the weight of all the theologies and systems which man's unfaith has heaped upon it, but is something active and growing, and embodying itself as it grows in theological and ecclesiastical system.

(3) The community is opposed to the individual as the organ of Christianity. Protestantism tends to regard the Christian experience, wherein Christianity spreads itself among men, as something always identically the same, repeated through an identical faith in an infinite number of separate individuals who, only in virtue of this identical experience possessed by each, form together the community of Christians. Newman regards the

Christian experience rather as the expanding developing life of a community, one and the same not through being repeated over and over again in individuals, but in virtue of the wholeness of the perfect community which it is in diverse modes creating. The unit of Christianity, so to speak, is not the individual but the Church.

To us, looking back in the light of subsequent experience, Newman's apologetic for orthodox Catholicism seems amazingly dangerous and double-edged. He is very bold in likening Christianity to other human ideas without carefully qualifying what he says. The retort springs to our lips immediately, "But these ideas change freely in development, because their validity in no sense depends on the personalities or lives of those who first invented and taught them. Why should we not then, on your argument, affirm the same of Christianity?" At first sight Newman seems unconscious of the danger. But probably his whole argument should be interpreted as leading up to the acknowledgment of a visible, infallible authority, continuously present in the Church itself. His favourite method of argument was to construct a dilemma between all or nothing, and he was always driving back into atheism or infidelity those who could not come the whole way with him. In his own mind the objective unity of the Christian faith and the necessary truths concerning its origin were restored through trust in the organ of infallible authority which

accompanied the Church through all the phases of its development. He was trying purposely to show that those who could not be led on to accept that authority would find themselves left not with any pure Biblical or evangelical or primitive Christianity, but merely with the arbitrary abstractions of their own predilections and prejudices.[1] He joined the agnostic in destroying a partial faith in order that he might drive believers to join him in seeking the shelter of a whole one. Moreover, it is quite possible that, writing as he did in days before the evolutionary attack on faith had to be met, Newman hardly realised the full and critical importance of the distinction between origin and validity, which he himself suggested. He was applying the distinction to Christianity before its full effect had been made clear through its application to the naturalism derived from Darwin.

Undoubtedly, however, Newman's argument opened the way for a systematic attempt to detach the validity of the doctrinal truth of Christianity from its association with certain particular facts connected in tradition with its historic origin. It was inevitable that the attempt should be made to give the ship of faith freedom of movement by cutting it loose from its moorings in New Testament facts. This general manner of solving the modern problem has been adopted in very different circumstances by two very different

[1] Cf. Tyrrell, *loc. cit.*

classes of thinkers, the theologians of Catholic modernism on the one hand, and the philosophers of evolutionary idealism on the other.

(1) The crisis in the history of Catholic Modernism came with the publication of Loisy's celebrated reply in *L'Évangile et L'Église* to Prof. Harnack's *Das Wesen des Christentums*. Harnack in his typical Liberal Protestant manner had analysed Christianity into husk and kernel. The kernel was Jesus' teaching of the universal Fatherhood of God and the conception of religious and moral duty which flowed from it. Jesus could not have originated this teaching and lived it out unless He had Himself been conscious in unique degree of His own filial relationship to the Father of all, and in this sense He must be called *par excellence* the Son of God; but the whole metaphysical doctrine of Christ's Person and the whole system of dogma and observance which centred round it, are no more than a husk which may to some extent have helped to protect the gospel in the first stages of its existence, but now at any rate are simply encumbering its life. Loisy challenged the whole argument by a more radical application of Newman's doctrine of the developing idea.

In so doing he supported his case by allying himself with the school of New Testament criticism opposite to that which had hitherto found favour with Liberalism. He emphasised the genuineness of the whole eschatological element in our Lord's teaching, and the whole of His supernatural claim,

as being the primary and dominant factor in His gospel. Loisy claimed that the whole of our Lord's ethico-spiritual teaching in its reference to this world was designed simply for the short period which was to intervene between His death and His return in the clouds of heaven. Thus when Jesus bade His disciples ask their daily bread from God and not to be anxious about the morrow, He meant literally that they were not to work for their living or take any rational step to provide for their own sustenance. Tyrrell (*Christianity at the Cross Roads*), following Loisy, goes even further in depreciating the importance of the ethico-spiritual teaching on which Harnack had laid such exclusive stress. This, said Tyrrell, was no more than a re-emphasis of standards already acknowledged in the best Judaism. The only original elements in our Lord's whole gospel were His identification of Himself with the Son of Man, the central figure in Jewish apocalypse, and His belief that the way for the triumphal end was to be prepared by the preliminary death of the Son of Man upon the Cross.

Was then the historic founder of Christianity no more than a deluded visionary, the greatest of religious maniacs? So Catholic modernists seemed to the plain man to be depicting Him. But they themselves had no such intention. They sought to re-justify the historic Jesus by laying their whole stress on the value of the *ideal* truth of His apocalyptic message as opposed to its realistic

fulfilment in actual fact, as to which the undoubted error was inevitable and unimportant. Jesus was, in fact, a man possessed by a tremendous idea, too great, too eternal, to be given any adequate expression in the categories of thought and language belonging to any one place or time. Like all other men, he had to incarnate the idea in the flesh of His own particular individuality, and to give it expression in the only language and thought which He Himself and His contemporaries in their particular circumstances could understand. Only He lived for a supremely universal idea in a supreme degree, and the greatness of His historic error was but the measure of the inadequacy of particular facts and formulations to express so universal a truth. The forms in which He preached His gospel were transitory, and from the point of view of more perfect knowledge defective, yet only in the sense that all particular expressions of a universal idea must be. The idea of the gospel which Jesus preached and lived and died for according to His time, lives and grows and embodies itself through all time. The error of Liberal Protestants lay in this, that they had isolated Jesus from the religious history which went before and came after Him, and that they had isolated one particular and subordinate element in His teaching from the rest, so that they had missed His meaning as a whole. Their attempt to isolate was uncritical, unhistorical, unphilosophical. The spirit and the letter, the idea and its embodi-

ment, the eternal truth and the changing form, are not thus to be analysed into separation. The spirit, the idea, the eternal truth, live and exist for us only through changing expression in developing forms, and therein lies the justification for the Catholic Church of history, whose glory it is that she offers to men the same essential gospel of Jesus not in spite of, but because of, the differences she has made in it.

"Jesus," says Loisy, "foretold the Kingdom, and it was the Church that came; she came enlarging the form of the gospel, which it was impossible to preserve as it was, as soon as the Passion had closed the ministry of Jesus. There is no institution on the earth or in history whose status and value may not be questioned if the principle is established that nothing may exist except in its original form. Such a principle is contrary to the law of life, which is movement and a continual effort of adaptation to conditions always new and perpetually changing. Christianity has not escaped this law, and cannot be reproached for submission to it. It could not do otherwise than it has done. . . . It is easy to see in the Catholic Church what stands to-day for the idea of the Heavenly Kingdom, for the idea of the Messiah, the maker of the Kingdom, and for the idea of the apostolate, or the preaching of the Kingdom, that is to say, the three essential elements of the living gospel which have become what they were forced to become in order to endure

at all. The theory of a purely inner Kingdom suppresses them and makes an abstraction of the real gospel. The tradition of the Church keeps them, interpreting them, and adapting them to the changing condition of humanity." [1] Even the interim character of Christian ethics, as Loisy elsewhere says, is loyally preserved in the Catholic Church. She still believes herself to be but the trustee of another world, the παιδαγωγὸς to bring men to heaven; her very sacraments, her own sacramental nature, point to the time when sacraments shall cease. Tyrrell's *Christianity at the Cross Roads* elaborates the same essential doctrine with still stronger emphasis on the objective otherworldly character of Jesus' teaching, its preservation in Catholicism, and the necessarily symbolic character of all the forms in which it is expressed.

But the fate of the modernist movement in the Church of Rome is a tragedy full of the paradox of human efforts after truth. For just as the realism of the Liberal Protestant, with its emphasis on the original facts, tended in the long run to a theology abstract, negative, doctrinaire, so the essential idealism of the Catholic Modernist tended to a theology too indiscriminately affirmative, over-ready to accept existing facts. As an acute critic has observed, "M. Loisy's philosophy of history is open to Jowett's criticism of Hegelianism, that it is a transcendental defence of the world

[1] *The Gospel and the Church*, pp. 166, 167.

—in this case the Church—as it is." [1] And the Church as it was upset the whole argument by repudiating M. Loisy. Well might Tyrrell admit in his preface to *Christianity at the Cross Roads* that Loisy had himself declared the position taken up in *L'Évangile et L'Église* to be untenable in view of the attitude of the Church. As for Tyrrell himself, it would, of course, be nonsense to say that his argument justifies the Church as it is. Rather it seems to be radical in its other-worldliness and extreme in its denunciation of the world and of the worldly Church both as they are and as they are ever likely in history to become. Yet the other-worldliness even here is justified more by passionate emotion than by logic. For never by Tyrrell's argument do we seem really to be brought into contact with the other world itself, so that we may judge the things of this world by any known criterion which it provides. Always the other world must be presented and represented to us in changing forms and symbols which are themselves thoroughly tainted with the imperfections of this world. Where, then, is there any voice speaking clearly from the other-worldly home of truth and righteousness to enable us to justify our other-worldliness and judge this world in which we live? Jesus Himself has become but a man of dark and mysterious speech. Tyrrell, like Loisy, needs the Pope to save his own position, to give practical reality to the other

[1] A. Fawkes, *Studies in Modernism*, p. 69.

world of which he dreams, to save him from being driven wholly back to the dim gropings of his individual spirit. But the Pope has cast him off. It was the tragedy of Tyrrell's life that he almost compelled the society, which he needed so sorely and defended so ably, to drive him into the outer darkness of isolation.

The Roman Church, indeed, took a fateful if inevitable decision in officially rejecting the main apologetic which Newman had adumbrated and Loisy and Tyrrell tried to perfect. The inherent difficulty of this type of Modernism is this, that, in spite of all the destructive character of its criticism, its essentially evolutionary principle tends to justify too much, and that therefore, unless it can attach itself to some concrete supernatural authority, it can provide no practical criterion for rejection and acceptance such as practical religion must have. "The Christian religion," says Dr. Foakes Jackson, "is a living organism, subject to the law of growth and development, and every step in its progress is the logical consequence of what is gone before." Strange words from one who seems to reject almost the whole of what the actual contemporary organism of Christianity teaches. "The present state of things is entirely justified," he seems to say, "since it could not be otherwise. Nevertheless in a few years you will see that it is all wrong." There in a nutshell is the whole impotence of Catholic Modernism revealed. In vain surely

does Dr. Kirsopp Lake long for the return of a golden age such as that of Aquinas, when the newest thought spoke with the same voice as that of the most widely recognised authority.[1] For by the principles of his logic he could not justify any conceivable synthesis between faith and thought except on the understanding that it must be wholly superseded soon; so that with the same breath that he accepted he would have also to reject. The only refuge is the hypothesis of some infallible authority enduring through the ages. Otherwise the modernist has no practical criterion, and is left at once accepting and rejecting *in toto* every actual phase of Christianity.[2]

(2) There remains, however, the possibility of calling in the metaphysician, instead of the Pope, to the modernist's aid. We must see what some of the philosophers of evolutionary idealism have made of Newman's principle. So far we have only recognised that, without the aid of concrete dogma and sacrament, Modernism must inevitably restrict itself within academic limits. In a philosophic form the ideas of Catholic Modernism have been active for more than half a century outside the Catholic Church. T. H. Green's great sermon on faith has recently been used again in controversy, and it is an excellent example of a type of philosophic Christianity exactly

[1] *Landmarks in the History of Early Christianity*, pp. 10–12.

[2] Newman saw that for this reason an infallible authority is essential to an evolutionary Catholicism, *op. cit.*, Chap. II, § 3.

opposite to the Liberal Protestantism which finds its Bible wholly in the synoptic gospels, and regards even Paul with suspicion. Green would almost persuade us that the great Pauline idea of redemption through the Cross is the essential thing, and would remain true in idea and not essentially impaired, even if the gospel story were a mere pious fable. But Edward Caird's Gifford Lectures on *The Evolution of Religion* are more relevant to our purpose. In a sense these lectures occupy a middle position between the radical development-theory of Catholic Modernism and the Liberal Protestant effort to return to the historic Jesus. Caird was under the influence of the older criticism which emphasised as original and authentic the moral and inward aspects of our Lord's teaching. He finds its central thought in the ethico-spiritual gospel of dying to live, of which he sees a theological interpretation in Paul and John, and he shows throughout a lively appreciation of and reverence for the simple profundity of the personality of Jesus. But he makes it quite plain that for him the core of Christianity lies in the idea and not in any historic person. "The first and last word of Christianity," he says in a characteristic passage, "is the unity or reconciliation of the human and the divine." [1] "As in its first dawn, Christianity is again beginning to show itself . . . as a principle at once subjective and objective, which

[1] Vol. II. p. 291.

reveals itself not only within but also without us, which is immanent in nature and in man, and which is working in him to still higher issues. But this lesson, wrapped up at the dawn of Christianity in types and symbols borrowed from an earlier faith, and apprehended only by feeling or at best by an imaginative intuition which had no means of explaining itself, is now becoming a reasoned conviction which can understand and criticise its own nature and evidence. The principle of Christianity has come to self-consciousness, and it is therefore capable of being held without that admixture of illusion which was inevitable in an earlier age." [1] Thus it is really in the theological doctrine rather than in the historic person that Caird finds the true Christian principle. What fundamentally appeals to him is the idea of a general law of divine incarnation and human redemption through self-sacrifice everywhere working itself out, rather than the fact of God made man on one particular occasion, or even the fact of the human goodness of the man Jesus. Thus the truth of Christianity is translated into a principle of idealist philosophy which the man Jesus intuitively perceived and expressed in mythological form. The Catholic dogma of the Incarnation is a more adequate form for the same idea, but this too has to be freed from mythological associations. It is belief in the revelation of God in

[1] p. 316.

man, not in one man, which to Caird constitutes the *articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiæ*.[1]

In America Prof. Royce made a most interesting attempt to present the ideas of Christianity as independent of their historic origin in the life and teaching of Jesus, by finding their essence in loyalty to the Church spiritually conceived rather than in allegiance to any particular person. "Let your Christology," he wrote, "be the practical acknowledgment of the Spirit of the Universal and Beloved Community."[2] This was a complete reversal of the teaching of Liberal Protestantism. But, speaking generally, evolutionary idealists have preferred to start their interpretations of Christianity from the idea of the Incarnation rather than from that of the Church. In recent years philosophic modernism of this kind has found perhaps its most persuasive exponent in another Scottish Gifford Lecturer, Prof. Pringle-Pattison. In his whole conception of the truth and value of Christianity he really follows Caird with remarkable closeness, though his philosophic defence of it is, of course, different. He, too, even more distinctly than Caird, finds the central truth of Christianity in the dogma of the Incarnation philosophically interpreted, while he protests

[1] Vol. II. p. 320. It is interesting to find Caird near the end of his life "making some notes in the direction of combating the Ritschl-Harnack view of the development of doctrine," *Life and Philosophy of Edward Caird*, p. 242.

[2] *The Problem of Christianity*, Vol. II. p. 428. Cf. also esp. Vol. I. pp. 416 sqq.

warmly against the orthodox tendency to limit the Incarnation to the particular man Jesus Christ. It is not that the life of Jesus is not essential to the Incarnation of God, but rather that the life of every other man is in principle also essential, and we must beware of putting the life of Jesus, metaphysically at any rate, on a different level from the rest. "'Man,'" he quotes with approval, "'is the true Shekinah'—the visible presence, that is to say, of the divine. We are far too apt to limit and mechanise the great doctrine of the Incarnation which forms the centre of Christian faith. Whatever else it may mean, it means at least this—that in the conditions of the highest human life we have access, as nowhere else, to the inmost nature of the divine. God manifest in the flesh is a more profound philosophic truth than the loftiest flight of speculation that outsoars all predicates and, for the greater glory of God, declares him to be unknowable." [1] The passage is wholly in harmony with Caird.

Now the precise effect of this philosophic defence of modernist Christianity is really very difficult to estimate. Dr. Rashdall [2] complains that Prof. Pringle-Pattison tends to justify too much, and that in refusing to isolate the historic Jesus at all he lays aside the criterion whereby practically the presence of God in man is distinguished. Here the Liberal Protestant finds the weak point

[1] *Idea of God*, p. 157.
[2] *The Modern Churchman*, Sept. 1921, p. 282.

in the modernist's armour which we have already noticed. But we must now carry our criticism deeper. With Modernism even more clearly than with Liberal Protestantism, what is ultimately found to be at issue is not so much a conception of Christ as of God. The real question which has to be asked and answered is this, "Does the philosophic defence of Christianity offered by Modernism start from an idea of God which is radically opposed to that of traditional faith?" We notice that the view of the Incarnation most severely criticised by Caird is that which sees in the life of Jesus a particular descent of the Son of God from heaven to earth.[1] And a little reflection on his whole argument seems clearly to indicate the reason. In Caird's view heaven is not really another world at all, but only this world viewed as the fulfilment of the immanent spiritual principle which guides its development. Similarly to Prof. Pringle-Pattison heaven would seem to be just this world's process of evolution in time viewed *sub specie æternitatis* as a simultaneous whole or single act. There is no reality outside the time-process of evolution; heaven is only the point of view from which it can be seen as a whole. God Himself does not exist above or outside it, but is only the immanent principle, ultimate agent and end of its development. That is why any notion of His intervention in the process must be regarded as nonsensical. Is it a very long step

[1] Cf. *op. cit.*, Vol. II. pp. 214–216, 232–240, 266, 267.

from this to the essential position held by Feuerbach, Comte and the Italian neo-idealists, Croce, Gentile and Ruggiero, who all, in different ways, seek to dissolve religion wholly in metaphysics and admit frankly that God is only a mythological name for a philosophic truth? We notice that Ruggiero in his *Modern Philosophy*, while he speaks almost with contempt of Ritschlianism, shows great favour to the idealism of Caird and the modernism of Loisy. He applauds the doctrine of the Incarnation as indicating a deep philosophic truth, that there is no God but man.[1]

Now it is clear that Prof. Pringle-Pattison himself is not unaware of the danger, and would strenuously resist this development of his views. He repeatedly insists on the real actual self-hood of God as more and not less than personal. Yet at the same time he will have it that the Divine transcendence is contrasted with the Divine immanence only in the same kind of sense as the ideal is contrasted with the actual. God transcends human life only as human ideals transcend human actualities. For it is Prof. Pringle-Pattison's metaphysical concern to keep the whole of Deity within the range of a possible or ideal human experience, and to repudiate all thought of any element in God which is in principle unknowable to man. And it seems to be at least doubtful whether these two attempts, to retain the full

[1] Cf. the discussions of Ritchlianism, French modernism and the English idealists, pp. 90 to 93, 211 sqq. and 275 sqq.

Divine self-hood of God and to represent the whole of Deity as knowable to man, are in the end consistent with one another.[1] If "transcendence does not mean" at all "remoteness or aloofness," if "the distinction it points to is" only "that between the perfect and the imperfect," and if "by perfection we understand" only "the perfect realisation of these very values which we recognise as the glory and crown of our human nature," [2] then it looks after all as if the idea of God were turning out to be only man's idea of his own ideal. And this line of thought brings us back in the end by another route to the Liberal Protestant tendency to identify God with good manhood. This is what makes it so hard to estimate the precise force of Caird's insistence, so often echoed by modern writers, that "Christ is most God when He is most man, and we most divine when we are most human." "He became human that we might become divine," said St. Athanasius, and yet under the verbal similarity lurks a whole world of difference.

The truth is that the theology of the evolutionary idealism which tends to regard the historic Incarnation as mythological seems to represent an over-refined and thin conception of the Godhead, just because it is so bent on justifying the whole of

[1] Prof. Pringle-Pattison himself admits the ultimate *incomprehensibility* of the Divine experience and activity: *Idea of God*, pp. 390 sqq.

[2] Quotations from the same author's article on Immanence and Transcendence in *The Spirit* (ed. by B. H. Streeter), p. 21.

this world of history. Animism crudely located its god in material facts and things, a tree, a stone, an earthquake or a thunderstorm. Cultured idolatry ceased to locate its gods on earth even in their images, but treated images as symbols of real beings whom it supposed to exist in another sphere. Modern idealists carry the process of refinement further and treat all outward things and happenings as symbols, more or less, of a universal Spiritual Being, Who is so utterly de-localised as to be at once everywhere and nowhere. He cannot ever be said to act here or there, just because He is and acts everywhere at once. Everything means God, suggests God, refers to God, has its end and explanation in God, but nothing *is* God. So God comes to be conceived in the end almost as nothing more than a universal meaning, explanation or ideal. He ceases to exist altogether as a Being substantive and concrete, and appears only as adjectival to all things and persons, as a law, a principle, or a point of view which enables us to see the world of things and persons as a coherent and harmonious whole. At this point psychologists, like Prof. Stanley Hall,[1] seem to be stepping in and trying as it were to restore to the Godhead some measure of concrete existence by identifying it with the group-spirit or race-spirit of humanity.

So the interpretation of Christianity in terms of evolutionary idealism has never fulfilled the

[1] *Jesus Christ in the Light of Psychology.*

promise which in Newman's prophetic utterance it seemed to give. Rejected by ecclesiastical authority, and debarred from attaching itself to any concrete religious society, it begins to lose touch with God altogether and ceases in the end to be religious at all. It tends to dissolve religion in metaphysics or psychology. Let us see what has happened in the extreme case to the three great antitheses in which Newman opposed himself to Protestantism.

(1) The basis of Christianity is the idea as opposed to the mere fact. This has passed into the doctrine that Christianity itself is a human ideal and nothing more.

(2) The essence of Christianity is its development as opposed to its origin. This, unless it is handled by a philosophic master like Caird, passes into a doctrine of mere evolution which justifies everything that ever was, on the ground that it changed into what is, and everything that is, on the ground that it is becoming something else, we know not what, that will be. Thus Prof. Stanley Hall tells us that he now accepts the whole of the Apostles' Creed because it means to him something quite different from what it could ever have meant to the Apostles.[1] The difficulty is to discover anything which modernists of this school can conscientiously reject.

(3) The organ of Christianity is the community as opposed to the individual. Unattached to a

[1] *Op. cit.*, Introduction, p. xviii.

visible Church, this principle passes either into a vague loyalty to a "Beloved Community" admittedly too universal to exist in fact, or else into a so-called religion of humanity which sees in God no more than the spirit of the race.

And yet we dimly feel that the result is a tragedy just because it might and ought to have been so very different. Liberal Protestantism is much nearer to orthodoxy; we can show wherein it has re-emphasised important Christian truths. Evolutionary Modernism, even while it loudly claims to justify everything, seems to be ending, from the point of view of orthodoxy, in sheer negation. Yet all the time we are vaguely conscious that it is feeling after deeper and wider truths, and contains after all the greater promise of helpfulness. The conceptions of the essence of Christianity as its wholeness, and of the contribution to that wholeness which is made by historical development in time, stand for philosophical principles of the utmost importance for a modern orthodoxy.

## III. TRADITIONALISM

The two types of theological thought which we have so far been considering both in the main tend towards such a complete unification of God with man, that in the end God's very existence seems to be dissolved into a value or an immanent principle or ideal end, an existence, we might say, without hypostasis at all. God is brought so completely within our experience that we seem to be losing sight of Him or faith in Him altogether as a Being over against, above, transcending all else we know, with Whom we can enter into personal relations as with Someone Else. The Liberal-Protestant realist starts from God in the historic Jesus, an external fact. Yet regarding that fact as a mere fact of history, he assumes, consciously or unconsciously, that Jesus is a mere man. He then tortures his brain in order to find means to predicate Deity of a mere man, with the inevitable result that Deity becomes a mere predicate. If he be a sub-conscious metaphysician, he will be dimly aware of his intellectual failure, and try to cover it by condemning all metaphysical theology, and declaring that the Deity of Jesus can only be defined as a value of His historic life for men. Otherwise he may take refuge in mere

sentiment or irrationality. But in the end he seems to deify a man, by taking a mere man Jesus for his God. The modernist of the evolutionary-idealistic school, on the other hand, starts from the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Cross as universal ideas symbolically expressing the divine principle which fulfils itself in the world, and reaches its highest in man. The universal idea or law reveals and fulfils itself in particulars and requires all their particularity; but all in the end equally contribute, so that there can be no one particular set over against others as the manifestation of the universal. So, just as the Liberal Protestant tries in vain to derive a universal Deity from a particular man, the Evolutionary Modernist cannot understand how the historic particular Incarnation can be derived from the idea of a universal Deity. Thus his universal, because it demands all particulars equally, ends by becoming either a mere adjective or a mere collectivity of the particulars themselves. Thus, where the Liberal Protestant deifies a particular man, the Evolutionary Modernist deifies mankind in general or in ideal.

In each case the conclusion is really latent in the premisses, and the premisses themselves are the product of a conflict which is in the heart of modern thought. The immense extensions of human knowledge typically marked by the discoveries of Copernicus and Darwin have caused a revolution which has, in fact, bewildered man's

faculty of knowing. Copernicus and Darwin respectively have ejected man from his central position in the world of space and in the world of time. They have brought dimly before his mind in a confused simultaneity inconceivably immense numbers and varieties of objective particulars filling millions of miles and of years, compared to which his own particular existence is as nothing. The immensity of the given seems to defeat hopelessly all attempts at objective measurement and classification. The doctrines of genera and species with which mediæval thinkers kept their world in control are burst and useless. The draught of fishes has destroyed the net. The many have proved altogether too many for the one. Yet man cannot live without making some attempt to unify his universe. And he has at least two resources left. He can select, more or less arbitrarily according to his interests or needs, one set of particulars, study them as objectively as he can, and make whatever he discovers about them a law for interpreting everything else, finally ignoring what proves recalcitrant. This is the method of the various forms of realism based on one or other of the physical sciences. Or, alternatively, he may bethink himself that the infinite mass of particulars presented by the whole of scientific knowledge only overwhelms his mind because it is capable of being presented to his mind in the form of a mental idea, and so he may find his principle of unity and explanation by

maintaining that all reality is ultimately mental. This is the method of metaphysical idealism.

The two types of theology we have been considering represent, very roughly and generally speaking, the application of these two fundamental methods to the Christological problem. The Liberal Protestant realist has isolated the facts concerning Jesus and has tried to find just in these facts, as scientifically and impartially established, the law and norm for all religion. The modernist-idealist has fastened on the doctrines of Incarnation and Atonement as representing great human ideas, in the development of which the mental reality of religion is seen and interpreted. Yet somehow the orthodox Christian feels that the Being Whom he calls God has been left out of the intellectual constructions of both parties, or at least is only brought back and retained inconsistently by an effort of faith or emotion which does not fit into either system as a whole.

What, then, is the position of traditional orthodoxy? Wherein does its philosophic outlook come into conflict with the modern systems? Has it some element to contribute to a real synthesis?

Historically, as recent criticism has been pointing out with admirable clearness, traditional orthodoxy is the heir of primitive and Jewish supernaturalism on the one hand, and of Platonic philosophy on the other.

Primitive supernaturalism pictured to itself a world of gods or quasi-material spirits existing

somewhere in heaven above earth and manifesting themselves through occasional interventions in the terrestrial sphere, which interventions altered what would otherwise have been the natural course of events. Judaism by its doctrines of ethical monotheism very greatly developed and modified these crude ideas, as they are seen, for instance, in Homer. The upper world of the gods was found by later prophets to contain only one God, Jehovah, the righteous and holy One, who had made the world and all that therein is, and had out of it chosen the Jews to show forth His glory. Jehovah was thought of as the complete potentate, perfect in justice and holiness as well as in power. But because He was still conceived anthropomorphically, His relation to the world was still expressed in terms of intervention from the upper world. He acted typically by coming down to interfere in the natural sequence of fact-events. Prayer was largely directed to securing such intervention, and when the intervention did not come, the faithful Jew was driven to suppose that Jehovah was purposely holding His hand and waiting for one great day in the future when all wrongs should be righted in a final theophany.

Platonism was, of course, governed by a very different set of ideas. Plato had been moved by the manifold imperfections which he found in natural phenomena when considered as objects of rational knowledge, to postulate an ideal world, existing not strictly in space or time, but neverthe-

less really and objectively, wherein objects of knowledge reappeared purged of all imperfections and contradictions and able to be the satisfactory and coherent objects of the philosopher's rational contemplation. Because Plato was interested almost wholly in the object, not the subject, of knowledge, in ontology, not epistemology, these ideas or objects of true knowledge naturally took as it were the character of thinghood. He thought of them not as personal nor even on the whole as living, but rather as objects or things eternally statically perfect, like the parts of some perfect work of art; and the grand principle which determined and harmonised the whole was the great Idea of the Good. Plato, of course, never adequately explained the relation of this world of ideas to the phenomenal facts with which our actual knowledge habitually deals. In one sense the ideas might be taken as just universals known in and through the particular phenomena of sense which embody them. Along this line of thought the Platonic ideas were gradually robbed of their transcendent other-worldly character; they became just bases of classification, and have been represented as in the end merely abstract universals, general notions of the mind which Plato at times falsely hypostasised. But in another sense the ideas were seen to be ideals, the real existence of which was postulated just because they were essentially different from anything which appeared in the changing flux of phenomena.

Along this line of thought the Neo-Platonists came more and more to conceive them mystically as forming a perfect changeless pattern-world eternal in the heavens, to be truly known only by those who turn away from the chaotic flux of phenomena, the particular facts of sense, which delude our bodily organs of cognition. Both these different lines of development find starting-points in Plato's works. But it is the latter, through its adoption by Plotinus and the neo-Platonists, which is chiefly important in the history of religion.

Evidently there is not much in common between the Jewish conception of a sovereign Jehovah reigning over and intervening on earth and the Platonic idea of the Good existing unchanged as the principle of a perfect transcendent world behind phenomena. Yet evidently also it is from both the Platonic transcendentalism and the Judaic supernaturalism that the Christian Fathers derive the apparatus of ideas and language with which they set out to interpret and define the Christian doctrine of God in Christ. The two ways of thinking and speaking may be incompatible, but they were, in fact, combined. Let us try to determine more exactly what element was contributed by each to the orthodoxy of Christian tradition. In doing so we must indicate at the same time the elements in the religious experience of Christianity which demanded both the Jewish and the Greek forms for their expression.

The Christian Fathers were quite sure that in

the life of Jesus Christ God had specially intervened from above in the natural order of events. God had sent His own Son, caused Him to be born of a Virgin, and raised Him from the dead, the Divine intervention being naturally attested by the miracles which all supernatural religion would consider proper to it. So far orthodox theology followed the distinctly Jewish line of ideas. For the Platonic or neo-Platonic One, the Supreme Being or Idea of Ideas, so to intervene in the course of natural events would be not merely unworthy of His nature, but directly contradictory to it. For the whole nature of this Supreme Being was to be supersensible, existing in static identity, above and apart from the world of changing events. The Platonic God could not act phenomenally and remain God. I am not sure that even Dr. Inge, when he urges a return to Platonism as the cure for our intellectual unrest, quite realises what an utter hash is made of the whole Platonic system of thought by importing into it the idea of a particular Incarnation on the phenomenal plane.

The facts of the Christian revelation undoubtedly meant to the Christian Fathers a divine intervention to be conceived in Jewish terms, but they also meant a great deal more. From the life of Jesus Christ had sprung definitely a new kind of life among men in the world, an altogether new closeness of Divine indwelling in the fellowship of Christians. And here the categories of Jewish

thought broke down. Here was a fact of which no account could be given without going quite beyond the category of intervention as expressing God's relation to men. And this Judaism was constitutionally unable to do. Within the category of intervention Judaism could reach the idea of a man being possessed or inspired by the Spirit of God, and at the beginning of the Church's life many phenomena occurred, such as prophesying and speaking with tongues, which seemed to conform to the type of possession and were readily accounted for as instances of the Spirit's intervention. But possession, thus accounted for, meant that the man's own normal control of his mental and bodily mechanism was for the time being set aside, and its place was taken by the Divine Spirit, so that the man himself was very likely not even conscious of what his body said or did under the Spirit's rule. Not being familiar with the psychology of the sub-conscious, the most spiritual Christians were naturally perplexed and shocked, when such intermissions of the normal control did not by any means always yield results such as they would have expected from the Holy Spirit's presence. Evil spirits as well as good, they found, might gain admission even into Christian souls, when the normal control was in abeyance, and gradually this whole class of phenomena in the Church began to be discredited and to disappear. And from this partial discredit and disappearance there shone the glorious truth

which Jesus and His Apostles had already taught, that the promised constant presence of the Spirit of God through Christ meant something different in kind, something deeper and higher, than anything which could be expressed in terms of mere possession and intervention. In the Christian fellowship the whole life of man was being raised on to a new plane: the indwelling of the divine in it was not made up of specific cases of intervention or inspiration, but was something organic to the life of the community itself. St. Paul had pictured the truth in his parable of the Body of Christ, and hinted at it again when he taught that the greatest of all spiritual gifts was the distinctive *agape* shared by all Christians. St. John's first epistle with its frequent iterations had tried to drive home the same lesson, while it more than ever revealed the inadequacy of human language to express it; "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." Jesus Himself foreshadowed this same intimacy of communion, when He insisted, to the exclusion of all else, on the filial relationship first of Himself, and then of His disciples towards God—"My Father, your Father." All such language implies a new closeness of fellowship with God, based not merely on specific experiences, but in the very life and nature of the participants. The relation of members to body, body to head, son to father, and that which St. John implies by his doctrine of immanent and transcendent Love, are all organic relations; they

modify and determine and characterise the whole nature of the terms or persons they relate. If the Christian community were in a new and special sense the body of the Christ-God, the family of the heavenly Father, dwelling in love and in God, this could not be brought about through any mere "possession" of human souls by a Divine Spirit, but only by a change, a growth, a development in the very constitution of humanity itself. In the phenomena of possession the normal control of the human self over its mechanism was surrendered and temporarily set aside. But in this experience of Christian communion the human selves were not thus set aside at all, but permeated, harmonised together and uplifted in their inmost nature.

Here then the Jewish theology expressing itself in terms of divine intervention broke down. It failed to interpret the new intimacy of man's communion in and with God; and it failed just because it was anthropomorphic. Thinking of God as of another man, a sovereign potentate ruling by fiat and intervention, it could not bring God into close enough connection with men's selfhood. The conception of God as man-like keeps God apart from men. It does not distinguish the Divine nature from the human sufficiently to give any account of such a distinctive relation and intimacy between men and God as Christianity brought to light.

But the early Christian theologians found that just here, where Judaism failed them, Platonism

could help.[1] The Platonic, or rather Platonistic, conception of Deity as ideal and perfect Being, partly the ground and cause of all phenomena, but more truly the mysterious reality which phenomena hide, offers a complete contrast to the Jewish. It is the very reverse of anthropomorphic. Indeed religious Platonism had emphasised to such an extent the infinite difference of God from man, that in the end God became only describable in negatives as unchanging, impassible, even beyond being as being is known in this world. Nevertheless, the Platonic God remained the philosophic ideal of the one eternal self-subsistent reality, and, because He was the only reality, all that is at all must somehow partake of His being and nature. The Platonic God never wholly lost the character of universality, and therefore it was always easier for the Platonist to conceive of men and things participating in Godhead than for the Jew, to whom Jehovah was always a particular person. Indeed it was a commonplace of all Greek mystical thought that in all men there was innate a spark of the divine eternal essence which was not subject to the phenomenal changes of growth and dissolution. Thus, in contrast with the Jewish, the Platonic conception of Deity was of something at once infinitely further removed from man and much more readily predicable of him.

[1] I do not, of course, mean to imply that Christians were the first to mingle Judaism with Platonism in theology. Philo and the author of *The Wisdom of Solomon* are sufficient witness to the contrary.

In Platonism, therefore, the Christian Fathers found a means of completing their interpretation of the Christian experience. God had indeed intervened in sending Jesus Christ on earth and raising Him from the dead, but by means of this intervention He had done infinitely more than intervene, He had bestowed on men through Christ a new permanent affinity with and fellowship in His own eternal nature, which had profoundly modified the whole constitution of human life itself. "The Son of God became human that we might become divine," said Athanasius. The Divine intervention in manhood was the origin and ground of a new fellowship and communion of men with God and in God, whereby the Divine eternal nature was imparted to men. So Judaism and Platonism were fused. And because the new communion had been initiated by the life of Jesus Christ and was maintained by men's membership in His Church-body, therefore the Fathers taught that in Him, the mediator, both the Divine and human natures were found. He had joined God and man, because He was Himself both.

Such is the essential position to which the tradition of orthodoxy has in the main clung ever since the first centuries of the Church's life. Let us first notice its main point of contrast with the modern theologies we have been considering.

The traditional theology depends on the doctrine of two natures in Christ, and through Christ also in men. And that doctrine of two natures arises

from a conception of two worlds. The duality of worlds was understood in very different ways. There was the primitive picture of a local home of the gods above the earth, refined by Judaism into that of the throne of Jehovah surrounded by His angel-hosts. There was, on the other hand, the Platonic-philosophic conception of a pattern-world of full unchanging reality centred in God as the ideal of perfect being, a world existing somehow as it were behind and beyond this illusory world of phenomena and yet also in part revealed through it. It is easy to emphasise the incongruity of the two modes of thought, and interesting to show how Christian theology shifted uneasily now towards one and now towards the other. But the two, nevertheless, had just this in common, that both equally maintained that the phenomena or factual events of this world were in some sense determined by, and could only be understood through, the realities of another world which man in his present condition of life could not fully know or enter into. "Who shall search out the ways of the Lord?" thought the pious Jew. "We must wait till all be made clear at the Last Day." Equally the Platonist and the neo-Platonist held firmly that man's sensible experience and the knowledge based on it were more or less radically vitiated by necessary error due to the participation of his own bodily organs in the phenomenal world. For him the true reality was only to be grasped and known on earth, if at all, in the philosopher-

mystic's vision, freed from all illusion of sense, wherein *αὐτὴ ἡ ψυχὴ* draws near at last to *αὐτὸ τὸ ὄν.*

The orthodox doctrine both of the Incarnation and of the Christian life was radically determined by this notion of a real duality of worlds. Christ's true being was essentially heavenly; His home was in the other world, the world above, or the world of absolute realities. He had nevertheless at once veiled and manifested this being of His in a human life on earth, and had taken up again manhood in Himself into the heavenly world, where men in their present condition of life could not follow Him. The Cross represented as it were the ladder to the other world, or the bridge over the gulf, which men could not completely or finally traverse without bodily death. The effect of Christ's descent and exaltation upon human life was the presence in the Christian fellowship of a new heavenly quality, new intuitions or anticipations of the other world, new affinities with the eternal. St. Paul was even bold enough to declare that with the spiritual part of their being men might die mystically and rise again and ascend to be with Christ in God, even while yet they remained in their mortal bodies. But even so a man's spirit was not the whole of him; the mortality of the body of flesh and blood still chained the spirit in some degree to earth, and the body must die and be renewed before the Christian could enter fully on his heavenly inheritance. On

earth he could only enjoy, as it were, a foretaste of heaven, which the apostle called the first-fruits of the Spirit. So it is that in the traditional view two natures meet not only in Christ, but through Christ also in the Christian, because he is now living in two worlds at once, and does not completely belong to either. Hence all his struggles and inner conflicts, which Christianity has intensified, his vague but glorious hopes, his heart-searching doubts, his unsatisfied longings. These are necessary accompaniments to his mortal condition. These teach him that on earth he has no abiding city. Now he knows only in part. He must wait for another world, another plane of existence and system of experience, to be entered only through death, before he can say, "I know fully, even as I am known."

I should perhaps apologise for repeating these trite expressions of a bygone piety which in spite of Tyrrell's passionate eloquence has become the derision of all the modern schools. My purpose is to define as clearly as I can the main difference between traditional and modern thought. The effect of the doctrine of two worlds has been to make a profound agnosticism an integral element in the traditional metaphysics of Christianity. It has been a permanent habit of Christian speculation to put off ultimate solutions to another world. This habit finds expression in the principle that the truth of faith is beyond reason, though not contrary to it. Reason is true as far as it goes,

but it lacks essential data which faith can dimly anticipate because it reaches out beyond this world.

Now modern thought will have none of this other-worldly agnosticism. It holds essentially to building all its speculative and metaphysical constructions on a basis of one world, not two. And it is very important to notice the reason. It is not merely that primitive supernaturalism has been abandoned in the light of science. It is that Copernicus and Darwin between them have most unwittingly succeeded in thoroughly discrediting Plato. The objective and ontological criticism of sensible experience, whereby Platonism argued to the existence of a supersensual world, has melted away before the revolutionary knowledge of the phenomenal world, its origin, extent, history and man's place in it, which scientific discoveries have brought. The vast horizons opened out and the revelation of his own apparent insignificance have fairly staggered man's mind. The whole attempt to argue along Platonic lines to a static, eternal world of pattern-realities behind such a gigantic flux of phenomena as science now affirms to exist, seems as much a play of fancy as Homer's fables of Olympus. At the beginning of this lecture we noticed the two kinds of resource which the human mind has adopted to escape from its bewilderment: (1) exclusive attention to some particular facts, or (2) the re-interpretation of reality in terms of human ideas. The characteristic of both attempts is that the objective other-world has been aban-

doned. The experience of this world has proved so overwhelming that man has not the faith or the effrontery to launch out beyond it. It is enough for him in all conscience to try hypotheses which will give some account of some portion of the data which this world provides. So even when he comes to religion, the modern thinker, Liberal Realist or Evolutionary Idealist, claims almost instinctively, often without realising the revolution he is making, to build his theory and his theology on data not only presented in this world, but wholly comprehended by it. So the Liberal Protestant in starting from the facts concerning Jesus sets miracle on one side at once, and pronounces that even the eschatological teaching reported of Jesus cannot be authentic if He is to retain our reverence. So equally the Evolutionary Modernist interprets gospel and dogma alike in terms of human idea, meaning by this nothing like what Plato meant by the term idea, but rather implying that all truths are relative to man and his mental life in this world.

All this means that man's mind in its quest for ultimate satisfaction has been turned back upon itself and forced, as it were, in self-defence to make itself the measure of all things. In such an atmosphere of thought it is quite impossible that the objective other-world or the objective substantial reality of a Divine nature different from man's could long be accepted. Such supposed transcendent existences seem to grow thinner and

thinner until they finally evaporate. Deity becomes either a human value, or a human ideal end, or some kind of human collectivity or race-spirit—perhaps something still more vague, like Bergson's *élan vital*. Heaven is just the name for a state of moral perfection, or else it is the last stage of human evolution, or else evolution viewed together as a quasi-simultaneous and fulfilled whole. Eternity becomes merely the significance of the time-process. Thus all the language which tradition applied to another nature of being, and another world objectively conceived, is now treated as symbolic of the laws and immanent principles which give meaning to this world of our present experience and thought. When the traditionalist tries to use the old words in the old sense, he is met with the ready retort, "You are talking of something outside human experience, that is, of something meaningless," and the answer is supported by references to obscurantism, transcendentalism, supernaturalism and other recognised terms of abuse.

Small wonder, then, if thinkers trained in the modern school and environment see little value in the Christology of the two natures. But we have tried to show that the real conflict between tradition and modern thought is not primarily Christological, but is the result of wider and deeper differences in whole conceptions of God and the world.

Let us in conclusion try to indicate the apparent

value and defects of the traditionalist position as we have described it.

(1) Its obvious merit lies in its uncompromising emphasis on the objective transcendent reality of God, and this, as we have seen, is bound up with the doctrine of two natures, two worlds, and with the fundamental agnosticism which the modern thinker so impatiently repudiates. The traditionalist has in truth a damaging repartee to make to his critics. It does seem paradoxical that the revelation of man's infinite insignificance in the physical world should make the modern man such a thorough-going humanist in religion, and strange that he should taunt orthodoxy at once with its anthropomorphism and with its scepticism of man's power to know all about God. The modern thinker's God is only not anthropomorphic, because He is merely human; He is not inscrutable only because He is not really above man's level. It really looks as if man, finding himself rudely ejected from his ancient sovereignty in creation, were trying to restore his self-respect by claiming for himself the throne of the Creator. So a traditionalist might well turn to bay. In any case the epigram in which G. K. Chesterton has somewhere described the difference between the poet and the philosopher may fit also the difference between tradition and modern thought in respect of their world-views. Traditional orthodoxy "tries to get its head into the heavens"; modern thought "tries to get the heavens into its head—and it is

its head that splits," after, we may add, having become somewhat swollen by its efforts. The attempt to make man the standard and measure of all things, whether man as he is or man as ideally including all that he will ever be, is profoundly unhealthy. Man is only in a true state of health or salvation when he knows that all his being and knowledge are derived from and dependent upon One who is infinitely different from and greater than himself. Just as true happiness can only be won by subordinating all happiness to an end of a quite different nature, so true manhood can only be realised by subordinating all manhood to a Being and Will which are infinitely other than human. The question is not one of theory only. For modern men and women persist not only in thinking, but in behaving, as though man's destiny, in so far as it can be rationally ordered, were entirely dependent upon himself. And increasing numbers of nervous breakdowns witness to the inevitable result.

(2) But we must beware of implying that traditionalism is not really open to much of the criticism that has been urged against it. It is, of course, a commonplace of criticism that the traditional doctrine of two natures in Christ tends simply to put together the Godhead and manhood without making any real attempt to combine them. In result the Godhead is left practically as an unknown *x*, manifesting itself occasionally in miracles, while the manhood really contains all the

Jesus Whom men know and love. Thus in the end the idea of a divine Incarnation is defeated altogether, since the Godhead remains in the last resort apart from the manhood, and does not penetrate and permeate it through and through. But nothing less than permeation is what is required by the gospel facts and by Christian experience. It is just the idea that God in Christ penetrates man to the very bottom which is the ground of the Christian faith that man can be wholly lifted to God, and have fellowship with God in the common things of life. This criticism is certainly sound in principle, and valid against many statements of traditional doctrine. It is at least true that orthodoxy has been constantly haunted and intimidated by the spectre of an unknowable and impassible God, which has long survived the death of Greek religion. This spectre modern thought has definitely exorcised, as it has also done much to combat popular notions of a tyrant God, which are the least desirable legacy of Judaism.

(3) The influence of the two-natures doctrine upon conceptions of Christian life and morality receives as a rule too little attention outside the Roman communion, though Baron von Hügel has recently done much to bring it back into prominence. It has been a great strength of orthodox Catholicism that to it the Incarnation has never been a mere intervention of God, it has been also the beginning of a communion which has permanently added to the nature of man. Catholic

theologians expound the theory that by the fall man lost a capacity for divine supernature which God bestowed upon him over and above his natural manhood; and this supernature is restored to man through the Incarnation and Atonement, mediated to him in the sacraments of the Church, and manifested by him in works of supernatural goodness. On the distinction between nature and supernature, natural virtue and supernatural grace, the moral law fulfilled by the one and the counsels of perfection made attainable by the other, the Roman Church has raised a whole structure of moral and ascetic theology. Thus the whole system of the Christian religion, credal, moral and ascetic, is made to hinge on a distinction between two natures which runs through every part. But the same danger confronts us here as in the Chalcedonian theology concerning our Lord's Person. The same difficulties and objections which defeat the attempt to see Godhead in some acts of our Lord and manhood in others, defeat also the attempt to separate into two classes the supernatural and the natural acts of man. Traditional theology in opposing thus the supernatural to the natural has constantly fallen into the snare of identifying the supernatural either with the abnormal or with the artificial. It has lost its grip on the truth that the most characteristic and only universal sign of supernature in man is the *agape* present in the Christian fellowship, the *agape* which may permeate every detail and corner of the humblest

Christian's life. Baron von Hügel has recently made a noble effort to restore to us this conception of the supernatural,[1] which has no doubt always been present in Catholicism. But a characteristic example of a very different notion is seen in the Roman Church's demand for miracle as a condition of canonisation. No one can be recognised as a saint who has not performed three miracles. Interpreting miracle in the accepted sense as a special intervention of Divine activity, this requirement seems at variance with the whole theology of the Incarnation. It ignores the fact that a relation of communion between men and God, in so far as it is realised, must supersede a relation of intervention. If the Incarnation and Atonement really established such a communion of men with God as St. Paul described in his figure of the body, miracle can no longer be the characteristic mark of God's action manward. If God once for all intervened through Jesus Christ to set up such a communion and fellowship, His continued Presence in it cannot be characteristically manifested in a further series of interventions.

It seems that traditionalist theologians have not yet exploited enough their doctrine of the consequences of the Incarnation in human life so as to find in it a means of transcending the primitive interventionism which they have inherited from the Jew. The relation of communion, established

[1] *Essays and Addresses in the Philosophy of Religion*, especially No. XI.

through intervention, is a relation new in type. It seems to stand as it were between mere intervention on the one hand and mere immanence on the other, and properly to exclude both. Yet orthodoxy is so hard pressed by the immanentalists on the one side largely because it so fails to shake off mere interventionism on the other. The crudest expectations of intervention are still widely held to be tokens of piety; and even in the twentieth century the question, "Why does not God stop the war?" found some orthodox teachers without a ready answer, because they could not point convincingly to fellowship with God on the Cross as the very means whereby God raises mankind to heaven.

## IV. ESSENTIAL ORTHODOXY

HITHERTO we have briefly examined three types of developed theology concerning the fundamentals of Christian faith. We have now to essay the much more presumptuous and difficult task of determining what those fundamentals are, in what consists, that is to say, the really permanent element in the Christian revelation which ought to be recognised as the one basis for every structure of Christian theology.

To succeed at all in this we must at least be modern enough to begin by going back to Christian origins, and this brings us at once face to face with the doubts and difficulties suggested by the historical criticism of New Testament documents. What are we to take as our primary basis of fact? We cannot think or speak as though modern criticism did not exist. But neither, on the other hand, must we allow ourselves to be entangled in a net of undecided controversies which would hinder us altogether from pursuing our proper subject. I propose, therefore, for the purposes of this discussion to make certain definite historical assumptions which would at any rate meet with very wide acceptance among acknowledged experts: (1) that the Gospel according to St. Mark and the passages common to Matthew and Luke present on the whole

an authentic account of our Lord's life and teaching; (2) that in the Acts and Epistles we have on the whole a true picture of the beliefs and practices of the first and, in part, of the second generation of Christians. In our first assumption we might include the substantial accuracy of much that is recorded of our Lord by Luke alone and some of that which is recorded by Matthew alone, without seriously alienating the main body of competent critics.

## I

We turn then to our Lord's teaching as set forth in these selected portions of the gospels.

(1) First we have the type of teaching commonly described as ethical theism, but really having for its central thought the family relations of God and men, the parental relation of God to man, the filial relation of man to God, the fraternal relation of man to man, and the duties proceeding from these relations. This teaching was held by Harnack to be by itself the whole essence of Christianity. Loisy, Tyrrell and Schweitzer, on the other hand, disparaged it as containing nothing original or uniquely characteristic of Jesus. But in this critics of the eschatological school were hasty and superficial.

(*a*) They overlooked the exclusive emphasis placed by Jesus on the Fatherhood of God. As Mr. C. W. Emmet [1] has brought out, the remark-

[1] *The Modern Churchman*, Sept. 1921, pp. 220, 221.

able fact is not that Jesus spoke of God as Father, but that apparently He never spoke of Him as anything else. He utterly ignored whole lists of names and titles of Jehovah which Jewish piety had accumulated.

(*b*) Again, these critics overlooked the freshness of the intensely intimate connection in Jesus' thought between a man's relation to God and his relation to his brother. It was Jesus Who set the seal to the juxtaposition of those two separate texts, "Love God" and "Love thy neighbour," as containing the whole message of law and prophets. It was He Who made it a central law of religion that God's attitude to a man's sins must be the same as the man's attitude to his neighbour's sins, so that what a man could receive from God was wholly determined by what he gave to others. Duty to God and duty to neighbour had already been familiar sounds in Jewish ears. But it was Jesus Who harmonised them so intimately together that out of the two He produced "not a third sound, but a star." The idea that true religion consists in regarding God and one's neighbour as the two distinct yet never competing objects of *agape*, was an idea which Jewish and heathen religion had been groping after but never really grasped. The statement of the truth by Jesus in all its simple profundity and wholeness is surely as genuinely original in His teaching as it is characteristic.

(*2*) In sharp contrast to this so-called ethical

theism, which is really so much more, there appear those passages in which our Lord speaks about the last things, the end of the world and the coming of the Son of Man. If we regard Mark and Q as substantially true records, we can hardly resist the conclusion that our Lord, at any rate at some time and in some sense, identified Himself with the Son of Man, Who, after He had been rejected and put to death by that evil generation, was to rise from the dead and finally to come again in glory from heaven to establish the full and perfect reign of God, wherein all His faithful servants were to share. The Liberal Protestants have sought to set aside or discredit this part of our Lord's recorded teaching. Some Evolutionary Modernists have found in it the key to the whole. According to them the only original elements in our Lord's message were His identification of Himself with the Son of Man, and His idea that He must be rejected and crucified as a prelude to His triumph. This was the real substance of His message, or at least He discovered it to be so before His ministry ended. His ethical discourses merely enjoined on His disciples a world-renunciation which was to be their way of life in the interval before the final coming of the Kingdom, the nearness of which He had preached from the very beginning. They could not and were never meant to give rules or principles of conduct for a permanently established society which was to contribute to this world's life.

No doubt there is much truth in all this, far more at any rate than the older school of Liberalism would be willing to concede. And the most recent attempts at a critical synthesis have more and more tended to suggest that our Lord's teaching and ideas changed very considerably during the course of His ministry. We may note that hypotheses of this nature which claim to trace and define development in our Lord's thought are bound to assume a very remarkable degree of historical accuracy in the documents; otherwise they could not even be plausible. Yet it may still be guessed by careful students that the two distinct notes of our Lord's teaching were actually in His own mind combined into a richer harmony than critics of any school are apt to allow. For the essence of criticism is analysis, and the critical temper is ever more ready to emphasise difference than unity. Perhaps fuller understanding is to be found in the close consideration of the doctrine and conception of the Kingdom in all the very different contexts in which it occurs. The Lord's Prayer seems naturally to provide the most classical and comprehensive instance of its use, which throws most light on all the others. Here the coming of the Kingdom is clearly to be interpreted by the phrases with which it is joined, viz. the address to God as " Father," the hallowing of His name and the doing of His will, " as in heaven so on earth." If the words " Thy will be done," etc. (which do not occur in St. Luke), were not part

of the original version, then they were added very early as an interpretative gloss, which there is every reason to think is a true one. The meaning of the Kingdom coming is then defined by the hallowing of God's name and the doing of His will. All are to be prayed for, all are future, and all find their pattern and completion in another world. But all equally are capable of progressive and proleptic realisation now on this earth. Whoever hallows God's name and does His will is *eo ipso* not far from the heavenly Kingdom. There are a number of passages which establish this ethico-spiritual meaning as opposed to that which is definitely eschatological. It is significant too that it is St. Luke who often specially stresses the ethico-spiritual use, whereas the gloss, if you suppose it to be a gloss, " Thy will be done," etc., is Matthew's. Moreover, the symmetry and logic of the Prayer make it natural to assume that the requisites for the hallowing of God's name and the doing of His will on earth by men, viz. the support of their bodily life by bread and the removal of spiritual hindrance through forgiveness, are requisites also for the coming of the Kingdom among men. It is not too much to say, then, that in our Lord's authentic teaching as a whole we find His conception of the final Kingdom as an eschatological event profoundly modified by His conception of the proleptic Kingdom as a spiritual inward power working as leaven in men's souls. And the combination of these two concep-

tions is only possible to one who thinks of the essence of the Kingdom always in spiritual terms as directly implying the hallowing of God's name, the doing of His will, and the approach to God as Father. So we conclude that the teaching about the human family of the heavenly Father indicates to us the proleptic form and the abiding essence of the final Kingdom which is to come at the last day.

(3) What of our Lord's conception of His own Person? Here Mark and Q give us very little definite information, except that towards the end of His ministry at least our Lord identified Himself both with the Davidic Messiah and with the Son of Man. Now these two figures stood in different forms of Jewish prophecy for the one who was to usher in and establish the final rule of God which should right all the chosen people's wrongs, whether that promised time were conceived more as a restoration of David's earthly kingdom or more as a divine theophany marking the end of the world. In either case the thought of the Messiah or Son of Man was strictly related to the thought of this final Kingdom, the Messiah being generally associated with the more millenarian type of prophecy, and the Son of Man with the more eschatological. It seems, therefore, reasonable to infer that, when our Lord identified Himself with each of these mysterious personages, He meant that He knew Himself to be the destined establisher and bringer-in of the Kingdom of God

as He conceived it. His idea of Himself and His office is determined by His idea of the Kingdom to which He assumed the relation indicated in the titles He claimed.[1] We should then conclude that as our Lord knew Himself to be entrusted during His earthly life with the task of establishing the Kingdom in its proleptic form, so He knew Himself to be He Who should bring in the final perfect Kingdom, however and whenever it should come. But His conviction of the spiritual essence of the Kingdom would also reflect itself in His idea of His own Person and work. The nature of the Christ or of the Son of Man must be related to the nature of the Kingdom He heralds or establishes. For instance, if the nature of the Kingdom is such that membership of it now on earth demands a daily self-sacrifice and service, that conception corresponds to the necessity that the Son of Man should now on earth be a servant and lay down His life for others. Similarly the final glory and triumph of the Kingdom will correspond to the final glory and triumph of the Son of Man.

It is difficult to be more definite as to the central thoughts and ideas of our Lord's teaching. It may well be that they developed and were modified by the course of events during His earthly ministry. But as we study them the impression seems to grow that we are in the presence of a profound and

[1] This point is well brought out by Mr. H. D. A. Major, *The Modern Churchman*, Sept. 1921, pp. 273–275.

living unity, and, if our dissection destroy it, it is our dissecting instruments which are at fault.

## II

We turn next to primitive Christianity as we find it in the Epistles and the Acts.

(1) And the first startling fact about our records is this, that right up to the 1st Epistle of St. John there is practically no reference or appeal whatever made to the actual historic teaching of the Master. The one definite exception in Acts xx. 35, and occasional broken echoes of words of Jesus in St. Paul, only make the general silence more impressive. The earliest Epistles, except 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, are occupied with the great circumcision controversy, a rock on which the Church nearly split and foundered before its voyage was well begun. Yet St. Paul never strengthens his arguments by quoting our Lord's words, nor, so far as we can tell, had he to meet such quotations made by his opponents. Later we have Epistles of the earliest persecutions, such as 1 Peter and Hebrews. Here our Lord's example is appealed to, and references are more frequent to the significance of His earthly life and sufferings. Of His sayings not a word. If documents containing His sayings were already in circulation, there is no distinct allusion to them. Yet all the while Jesus Christ is the one constant theme of every Epistle in the New Testament. He is

continually referred to as risen from the dead, living and spiritually present. He is called Lord and Saviour, and is most intimately associated with God Himself; He is believed to be about to appear again in glory at the last day. But about His historic teaching, silence. One often wishes that Liberal Protestants would seriously face this fact and ask its meaning.

Finally, the 1st Epistle of St. John is altogether unique. This precious document may fairly be regarded as stating the essential meaning and content of Christianity as it had emerged from its early years of controversy and persecution. And in a sense it takes us right back over Paulinism to the Jesus of the synoptists and His teaching about the family relationships between men and God. It tells us again and again that Christianity consists simply in keeping His commandment that we should love God and one another. Yet no Epistle insists more strongly on the identification of Jesus Christ with the Eternal Son, on His historic Incarnation, and on His abiding presence in those who believe on Him. Nothing in the Johannine writings is more remarkable than their combination of the simplest statements about brotherly love as the one thing needful, with the most uncompromising emphasis on the theology of the Incarnation.

(2) In the Acts and Epistles then we find tremendous insistence on the living reality and claims of our Lord's Person, contrasted with utter silence

about His teaching. The one noteworthy exception to the silence is the return of 1 John to the primary duty of keeping Jesus' commandment of love. Yet a careful student is not more struck by the silence of the Epistles as to the words of our Lord's teaching than by their substantial faithfulness to its ideas and spirit.

(*a*) Our Lord uttered no explicit directions which would have settled the circumcision controversy—and no directions were appealed to. Yet no serious student of the gospels can doubt that the controversy was decided according to the mind of Jesus, and that chiefly through the efforts of the only apostle who had not had converse with that mind in the flesh. Indeed St. Paul's whole argument about justification by faith reproduces, with a faithfulness more remarkable for the utter diversity of language, cardinal and characteristic principles of our Lord's whole doctrine. By faith St. Paul meant in effect the Christward orientation of the personality, the ὄρεξις of the whole man after Christ, which makes the believer capable of receiving and experiencing the transforming power of God's love through Christ. This attitude of soul was what justified the man, because it made him capable of the highest life; whereas the search for justification by works, *i. e.* the exact performance of a code, either left a man in despair or created a far more dangerous illusion of salvation attained, when the highest was really out of sight. The argument was specially directed

against the self-satisfied feeling of orthodox superiority which made the strict Jew incapable of placing himself for one moment on a level with the Gentile sinner. The essence of our Lord's teaching about publicans and harlots going into the Kingdom before Pharisees is exactly the same. The publican who knew his utter need was justified rather than he who performed all his duties, and thanked God that he was not as other men. The common and characteristic principle in the two teachings is that spiritual health is to be measured by the capacity to grow rather than by the stature attained, by the ability to receive rather than by what is already possessed. From this point of view self-satisfaction is the only strictly mortal sin, because it destroys the power to grow and to receive. St. Paul's whole doctrine of justification by faith is a theological commentary on our Lord's paradox, "To him that hath shall be given." Everything turns on receptiveness. "Blessed are the beggars in spirit."

(*b*) But most instructive of all it is to notice how and with what differences the union of duties to God and neighbours, so intimately characteristic of Jesus, is reproduced in apostolic Christianity. Study in St. Paul, St. Peter and Hebrews the great ethico-spiritual exhortations on the duties of Christians to each other and the outside world. You will find the same insistence that duty to God is fulfilled in and through fellowship with the brethren and service of others, the same valuation

of heavenly spiritual things in comparison with earthly material things, the same idea of freedom and happiness in God's family won through self-denial, the same requirement of inward purity. But here is the difference. In the Epistles you will find all these virtues and excellences not simply enjoined, not presented as just the fulfilling of precepts uttered by Moses or Jesus or even set up by God, but rather as the inevitable natural and spontaneous fruit of being joined by faith to the living Christ. St. Paul does not say, "Because you are to follow the teaching of Jesus, therefore you must not covet or defraud or give way to impurity." He says rather, "Because you belong to Christ and His Spirit is in you, you cannot do these things, they are a contradiction of your very life." This harmonises entirely with our Lord's teaching that a right attitude to God is one with a right attitude to other men. But this union of right relations to God and neighbour is presented in the Epistles not as a following of the teaching of Jesus, but as the result of entering by faith into a living fellowship wherein He dwells.

The same thought is just as strongly present in 1 John. True, this is the first and only Epistle which explicitly identifies Christianity with doing what the historic Jesus said. But the Elder who wrote it teaches infinitely more than that. On the one hand, he pushes to its conclusion the synoptic teaching of Jesus that the love of God and neighbour is man's salvation, that the two

loves go together, and are in fact so bound up with one another as to be strictly inseparable. On the other hand, he asserts with impressive theological and mystical boldness that to follow this teaching of Jesus is " to have both the Father and the Son," that Christian love means the living immanence of Christ, and that all depends on an acknowledgment of the historic Incarnation, " Jesus Christ come in the flesh." To the Elder as to Jesus true religion consists in a fellowship of love as it were in two dimensions, vertically towards God, and laterally towards brother men. But to the Elder the fellowship had been realised and made concrete in the Christian society through the coming of Jesus in the flesh, His death and resurrection, and the abiding of His Spiritual presence, which all declare Him to be the Eternal Son. The Elder has not tried to weave together into a logical whole the different strands of his thought; but we feel there is a wholeness there none the less, and he has epitomised for us, as no other author, the Christianity of the New Testament.

## III

Now if the foregoing be a substantially true account first of the Christianity of the synoptic gospels, secondly of the Christianity of the Epistles, what conclusion can we draw from the relations between them as to the essence of the New Testa-

ment Christianity and the basis of all Christian faith?

Let us first briefly recapitulate and restate our conclusions. Beginning with the teaching of Jesus, we found that it centred in two main ideas. (1) A present establishment of family relationships between God and men, a spiritual fellowship of love in two dimensions. (2) The future coming of the Kingdom of God from heaven, which was also to be the manifestation in glory of the Son of Man. But we saw some reason for thinking that in our Lord's mind the essence of the Kingdom was always spiritual, *i. e.* directly connected with the relation of souls to God, and therefore the establishment of God's family fellowship now was, so to speak, the proleptic form and sign of the coming of the Kingdom that was to be. Perhaps towards the end of His ministry our Lord came to insist more and more on self-sacrifice and service unto death as the means whereby the final Kingdom was to be hastened, and in that belief was crucified Himself. In any case, He knew Himself to be the great Agent of God in preaching the present fellowship and in bringing in the final Kingdom. His conception of Himself is to be determined by His conception of the Kingdom, to which He claimed to stand in the relation of Messiah and Son of Man.

Turning next to the Acts and Epistles, we found the same cardinal idea of the Christian religion as consisting in the double fellowship of

men with God and one another, and this fellowship is now actualised in the Christian Church, so far as it is true to itself. But this is not presented as resulting from the observance of any teaching of Jesus, but as the manifestation of His Spiritual and Risen Presence in the life of the Church itself. This is what the Christians seem to have believed. At first they supplemented this experience of the Spirit of the Risen Christ by an expectation of His imminent return to end this world and bring in the final Kingdom of which He had prophesied. But gradually the present experience of fellowship in Christ led them to a deeper understanding of the spiritual nature of the Kingdom. So only can we account for the fact that disappointment about the Second Coming did not discredit the Church or its faith as a whole. The Christians still found in their present fellowship only a preparation for the Kingdom itself, yet they came to rely more fully on its strictly heavenly, eternal nature, and to find in their experience of it the beginning of the fulfilment of Christ's promise to come again. So in the Johannine writings the thought of the final coming, though still present, has passed into the background. The certainty of present fellowship with Christ is stressed as the ground of confidence for the future, because it is in its own proper nature heavenly and eternal. "We are in Him now" is the Johannine thought, "and that is all that really matters. It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that

we shall be like Him." Thus the Church became more and more, not indeed identical with the Kingdom, but as it were its outward earthly sacrament, its symbol and organ living with its life, while it prepared the way for its fulfilment.

As to the Kingdom, then, we conclude that both in our Lord's teaching and in the experience of the primitive Church the conception of it and of the relation of its present and future manifestations is to some extent fluid; it is capable of being expanded, deepened and viewed in different temporal perspectives, because its underlying spiritual essence is the same. "The Kingdom of God," says St. Paul, "is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." No doubt he was thinking primarily of the future final Kingdom. But its essence is heavenly, spiritual, and for that reason its identical life of righteousness, joy, peace is to be manifested as it were proleptically in the Church on earth.

And always through the New Testament the relation of Jesus Christ to the Kingdom as its Herald, Lord and Founder remains constant. Did Jesus preach to men "Repent, for the Kingdom is at hand," and speak of a present entry into its blessedness? He knew Himself its appointed messenger and prophet. Did He speak of its final coming in glory at the end of the world? He identified Himself with the Son of Man Who was to come in it and with it. Did Christians afterwards find in the fellowship of the

Church the first-fruits or foretaste of what the Kingdom should be? It was because they knew that the Risen Lord was already coming to them through His Spirit.

If all this be substantially true, we may now advance a step further. We must say that the New Testament presents us with a phenomenon different in kind from the following of a dead prophet's teaching by his disciples, or from the birth of a new formative idea in religion through the conjunction of certain mental and physical circumstances at a particular time and place. If the New Testament records be at all substantially correct, what we see in them is the progressive actualisation and interpretation of a teacher's ideas through the continued operation of His living Spirit in the society of His followers. Once more, it was not the following of the teaching of Jesus which produced the Christianity of the Epistles. Its correspondence with the teaching is far too little explicit and on the surface, far too subtle, too vital, too inward, for that. The connecting link of the New Testament, as the Johannine literature affirms, is a continuous personal life, the life and mind of Jesus Christ first manifest in the flesh and then re-embodied in the true Christian fellowship which it empowers with its own vitality. St. Paul was uttering no mere poetic fancy when he said that Christian believers were the growing body of Christ.

This, then, is the basis of orthodoxy, the fact

which all orthodox Christology is meant to interpret and account for. Orthodoxy, in other words, is the attempt to give an account of the Person of Jesus Christ as the connecting link of the New Testament history, that is, as the author, the ground, the immanent life, and the final goal of the Christian κοινωνία or fellowship.[1] We can see its starting-point, if we consider the clauses of the Apostles' Creed in reverse order, beginning with the Communion of Saints considered as identical with the Holy Catholic Church. Down to this point the Creed is a notable example of the logical order reversing the psychological, of the order in which truth is stated reversing the order in which truth is reached. The primary experience from which Christology starts is that which arose from Pentecost, *i. e.* the sense of a holy fellowship in which men stood in a relation of *agape* towards God as Father and towards each other as brethren. There is the empirical fact of the communion of saints embodied in the Church. Whence, then, had this communion arisen? As soon as the first Christians asked this question, they would give the answer, "From the coming of the Spirit upon us at Pentecost." They believed in the Holy Ghost. But how was it that the Spirit came then and with such results? The Christians connected this, again, with the

[1] The importance of the Koinonia as the fruit of Pentecost and the basis of Christology has been emphasised by Dr. Anderson Scott in *The Spirit* (ed. by Canon Streeter), and in his own book, *The Fellowship of the Spirit.*

wonderful indefinable experiences which the Creed describes as the Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord. The Risen Ascended Christ had somehow sent the Spirit. And again the Resurrection and Ascension themselves were only the climax, only the fulfilment of the life of Him Who had been their great Prophet and Rabbi and Healer, and Who had finally faced in heroic, and still more mysterious, self-sacrifice the most terrible of deaths. His mother was still among them. So the Christians' minds would work back over the past to account for the present. Who, then, must this Jesus Christ have been? There was the last great question, and before long the Christians learned to say that He could have been and could be none other than the only-begotten Son of the Almighty Creator and Father of the world.

## IV

So we can dimly reconstruct the kind of thought which constrained men to Christology. But how came they to perplex themselves and their descendants with that fearful riddle of two natures in one person?

We have already partially answered this question in the last lecture. The form of the dogma was, as we saw, largely due to the methods of thinking characteristic of the Jew and the Greek. But we have not yet examined the basis in experience which connects the dogma inseparably

with the New Testament record. The fundamental experience of the New Testament may be roughly analysed into three ultimate certainties. (1) Human life had been exalted into a new fellowship with God in the Christian community. (2) This newness of life came through Jesus Christ, was the fruit of His death and resurrection, the token of His living Presence in the Spirit, and the preparation for His final manifestation in glory. (3) This whole work of Jesus Christ and its results were fundamentally the work not of man but God.

Those are, so to speak, the empirical data which the doctrine of two natures in one Person was meant to cover. It had no primary reference to the psychological problem of the consciousness of the God-man in the days of His flesh. That problem was bound to arise, but it was subsequent, derivative. The primary datum was not just the earthly life of Jesus, considered in isolation. It was the effect and continuation through death and resurrection of the life of Jesus Christ in the fellowship of Christians. This has emerged quite fully and clearly in the Johannine writings, *e. g.* in the prologue to the gospel where the Incarnation of the Word is immediately connected with the giving to men of power to become sons of God. The same relation of Christology to the community is seen in the early formula used by Athanasius, "He became human that we might become divine."

It is not difficult to see how the datum of Christology so conceived makes inevitable some kind of doctrine of two natures in Christ. The man Jesus Christ had shown forth and was giving to men a new life of fellowship in and with God. But the whole gift was God's, not man's. Christians could only do justice to this paradox by saying that in Jesus Christ God has somehow become man, and thereby brought manhood into union with God. Somehow, therefore, Jesus Christ must be both God and man. The psychological order in which Christology was reached gives us the following sequence. (1) The new human life of fellowship comes (2) through Jesus Christ (3) from God. The logical order in which Christology is stated inverts the sequence. (1) God (2) through Jesus Christ (3) gives the new life of fellowship to men. In both orders Jesus Christ remains the middle term. He is, in that startling Johannine image, the ladder between earth and heaven, on which the angels of communication ascend and descend.

Now starting from this fundamental conception of Christ as Mediator, Christian theology was simply bound in the long run to think of Him in one of two ways, either (1) as completely God and completely man, or (2) as some kind of being intermediate between God and man, *i. e.* a demi-god or a superman. In all ages the latter alternative has been found congenial to popular superstition. But orthodoxy has quite rightly

pointed out that it defeats the whole purpose for which Christology was framed. For it interposes another being between man and God, and leaves where it was or thrusts down still further the common humanity which Christ has raised to fellowship with God, if Christianity be true.

So we are left with the conception of Jesus Christ as in some sense completely God and man. But in what sense? The ancient dogmatists answered in negatives, ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀχωρίστως, ἀσυγχύτως. In modern language, the two natures are to be conceived as distinct but not as separate. The answer is negative, but history has proved and is still proving the value of its caution. Ancient orthodoxy very often paid but lip-service to the terms ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀχωρίστως. As modern critics have not been slow to point out, very much accepted theology has, in fact, separated the two natures in Christ, and has only disguised its heresy by a strenuous insistence on the unity of His Person. It has tended to picture Jesus Christ as possessed of two organs of life and action, one Divine, one human, so that in certain relations He uses one as God, and in certain relations the other as man. Thus the impassibility and immutability of the Godhead have been saved by evacuating the Incarnation of its most precious meaning. For God "does not redeem what He has not assumed." He does not save what He has not penetrated into and permeated with Himself. It is the Christian faith that in

Christ God humbles Himself to penetrate the most commonplace and the most painful experiences of humanity. This is the basis of the Christian fellowship with God.

Modern thought, on the other hand, in attacking the traditional dogma, has too often only succeeded in justifying its use of the word ἀσυγχύτως. Sometimes it has tried to present the Deity of Jesus as a value of His humanity, as though He were a man so surpassingly good and of such surprising power over others, that we are justified for that reason in calling Him God without further metaphysical implication. Sometimes it has vaguely thought of the Incarnation as implying the general divinity of mankind in its ideal perfection, as though God were no more than a name for the motive and end of human development. Thus the Divine and human natures are confused, not in Christ only, but in reality as a whole. Indeed it is the general blurring of the distinction between man and God in modern thought which seems to produce the radical hostility so commonly shown to traditional doctrines. And again we must reply that such confusion, such blurring of distinction, is false to the Christian experience, to account for which and to encourage which Christology exists. The Christian experience is essentially one of the communion of men with God through Christ; and for that relation of communion clearness of distinction is quite as necessary as removal of separation.

Indeed we notice that fellowship with God and fellowship with men complement each other just because God differs in nature from man. If God were only personally distinct from us, as we are personally distinct from one another, His presence would only add another person to our fellowship, it could not be the source and completion of the whole. It is the difference of God's nature or substance from ours which enables us to assert that we love Him in loving the brethren, and, again, love the brethren for love of Him. In so far then as Jesus is truly God, He is also more and other than man, and we must be able to give some intelligible account of that otherness.

Our object in this lecture has been simply to trace the limits within which any theology that can justly claim to be orthodox must move. We have argued that the primary datum of Christianity is not just the life of Jesus taken by itself, nor the mere genesis of a new religious idea embodied in a society, but essentially the effect of the historic life of Jesus on the life of the Christian community, which effect is inseparable from the continued life and Spiritual presence of Jesus Himself as the Church's head. Thus it was that the Christians felt themselves to be exalted into a new fellowship with God and with one another. The purpose and meaning of orthodox Christology is to give an account of the Person of Jesus Christ as the author and ground of this experience, and the orthodoxy of any Christology

must ultimately be judged by its success in this task. The very terms of the Christological problem so stated demand a solution which includes some idea of two distinct natures united in Christ. The Chalcedonian dogma, in so far as it is binding and authoritative, defines negatively the limits within which Christological theory must move, rather than affirms any particular theory of its own. We have seen some justification in history for its warnings. But we have still to indicate the lines along which we may try to feel our way towards a modern Christology which, while adhering to the essential terms of the problem, may yet freely use the resources of modern thought as a help to its solution.

## V. PHILOSOPHIC CONCEPTIONS OF THE UNION OF GODHEAD WITH MANHOOD

In the last lecture we practically reached the conclusion that the two-natures doctrine as defined at Chalcedon is just a form or mould for Christology. Up to a point it is a permanent and necessary form. The union interpenetration and distinctness of Godhead and manhood in Christ are irreducible elements in the Christian experience itself, and cannot be absent from any religion which legitimately claims the Christian name. But the dogma itself, however carefully it may describe the manner of the union of two natures by words like ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀχωρίστως, ἀσυγχύτως, must remain a mere form, deriving its content from the positive conceptions of Deity and humanity which men put into it. And it is the content so put into the dogma which mainly determines its value. Apart from a worthy conception of what Godhead and manhood really mean, orthodoxy about the two natures is evidently worthless.

Moreover, it is clear that ways of thinking about Godhead and manhood differ in some degree from age to age, and according to this difference the way in which loyal Christians think of Christ's Person is bound to vary also, though the loyalty itself remain constant, and there need be no

contradiction between present and past. In this lecture I propose to illustrate various ways in which the general relation and distinction between Godhead and manhood has been thought of and to indicate their Christological effect. We shall thus prepare the way for an attempt in the last lecture to sketch the lines along which modern thought might best present to itself the fundamental idea of orthodoxy.

## I

Jewish thought, as we suggested in Lecture III, never felt the need of elaborating for itself any distinction between Divine and human natures. It was essentially anthropomorphic, and anthropomorphism must think of God's difference from men as one of degree rather than kind, of quantity, as it were, rather than nature. So the power and wisdom and love of Jehovah could be thought of as like a man's but infinitely greater in degree. With holiness, however, it was otherwise. Herein for the Jew lay the real difference in kind between God and man. Jehovah was holy essentially and the fount of holiness, while man's nature was essentially unholy and common, except in so far as Jehovah definitely chose out and separated from their fellows for sanctification certain members or families of the human race. If the essential content of Jewish thought about Godhead were formulated according to the categories of the logic

we derive from the Greek, it would probably appear that for the Jew, whereas man *qua* man has some small share in all other attributes of God, wisdom, love, goodness, etc., man *qua* man is not holy at all, and only becomes partaker of holiness through a special act or choice of God setting him apart from common manhood. Indeed the idea of holiness is so closely bound up with that of the separation of Godhead from manhood that it is difficult to attach any definite meaning to it that is not simply negative. Holiness often appears to be not so much an attribute of God as a sort of pervading quality of all His attributes, which expresses their mysterious difference in Godhead from what they are in manhood. It stands for the limit and the correction of that anthropomorphic way of thought which was so characteristically Jewish; it suggests the terrible awe and mystery which must always surround the humanly conceived Jehovah. The only positive meaning we can give to holiness is purity, which itself is a quasi-negative expressing absence of all sin or defilement. The very eternity of Jehovah to the Jew would not primarily involve any metaphysical conception of timeless or simultaneous reality, but would rather be thought of as belonging to the holiness of a Being which could in no wise be tainted or defiled with death.

With this idea in our mind of what the Jew really felt about the difference between God and man, it is interesting to refer to the Christology

of the Epistle to the Hebrews. At first we find no hint of Chalcedonian doctrine, but rather implied rejection of later orthodoxy. To the author of Hebrews Jesus is clearly an individual man, who grew and developed and learned obedience as any other. Sinlessness or holiness is, Dr. Nairne points out, the only point of difference between Jesus and other men which the author actually defines. Yet we cannot appreciate his real meaning unless we remember that holiness does to the Jew present the essential and exclusive nature of Godhead. It was just because Jesus was a perfectly holy man that the author of the Hebrews is able to identify Him with the Son Who is the ἀπαύγασμα and χαρακτὴρ of God Himself. The theological aim of the letter is to show that the Divine holiness in Jesus does not contradict His partaking of common flesh and blood and suffering in them upon the Cross, as imperfectly Christian Jews were tending to think. To meet this difficulty the author argues that the sanctifier and the sanctified must be of one, and hence it was necessary that the perfect sanctifier, Jesus Christ, should partake of the common flesh and blood of His brethren, suffer and be tempted with them. His death was not a defilement but a sacrifice whereby humanity is made holy. In other words, the substance of the contention is that in Jesus the Divine holiness had not been made common but rather that it had raised the commonness of manhood into its own holiness.

And if we may take holiness as representing to the Jew that which essentially distinguishes God's nature from man's, we have already in the Hebrews a very exact foreshadowing of the later Greek doctrine, "He became human that we might become divine." The sanctification of man through Jesus meant to the Jew what the imparting of the Divine nature to man through Jesus meant to the Greek.

This reflection makes us wonder how far the association in the New Testament of *ἁγιότης* with *κοινωνία* (from *κοινὸς*) was originally felt to be new and paradoxical. As Dr. Anderson Scott points out,[1] the *κοινωνία* of the *ἅγιον πνεῦμα* is to some extent a fresh idea in religion.[2] Its basis was the experience of the Christian society that the Holy God through Jesus Christ had created a holy fellowship in common life between men and God. God remained holy, but the separation and isolation connoted by holiness had been overcome. This experience suggested from the first a doctrine of two natures in Christ of a kind which would assert that the separate holiness of God had in Him come forth from the shrine and had taken on itself, as it were, the vesture of commonness, in order to bring men together in common fellowship back into God's holy presence. All this highly developed doctrine of the Incarnation is

[1] His Essay in *The Spirit* already referred to.

[2] Hebrews seems to avoid joining the verb *κοινωνεῖν* with *ἁγιότης*. Contrast *κεκοινώνηκεν αἵματος καὶ σαρκὸς* (II. 14) with *μεταλαβεῖν τῆς ἁγιότητος* (XII. 10).

implied in the more or less Jewish Christology of the Epistles.

## II

Greek thought subsequently created and kept possession of the two-natures doctrine in its explicit form. Nevertheless in a sense it made less of it than Judaism might have done, had Judaism been allowed to pour more of its own best wine into the Greek bottles. For the essential characteristic and differentia of Godhead was, according to Greek ideas, not holiness but immortality. The gods of popular Greek religion were simply immortals, and men might be practically deified by having immortality conferred upon them. Hence in Greek philosophy and philosophic mysticism, Deity was essentially the reality untouched by death, decay, change and all that they implied; the human soul was often believed to possess a spark of Divine essence which was itself deathless and divine. A religion based on thought of this kind readily conceives the idea of man being made partaker of the Divine nature. For the one Divine reality is, as it were, at the root of all things, and all things real partake of it in some sense. On the other hand, it habitually conceives the union of man with God as taking place through the negation of mortal bodily life and all which seems to pertain to it. To the religion of neo-Platonism it was almost self-evident that the soul could only claim to realise its oneness

with God in a state beyond pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, change or affection of any kind. This was a corollary of its whole idea of the Godhead. It was really impossible for Greek thought to entertain the notion that God Himself could undergo suffering and death without entirely contradicting the first principle of His nature. Thus while the forms of Greek thought supplied Christianity with categories for Christology, its content continually hampered the expression of what the Christian experience of God really demanded. The weakness of Hellenistic Christology is a familiar theme of modern Liberalism, but it requires careful definition. It is not the conception of two natures which is at fault, but the fact that the Divine nature was thought of in an unchristian way. The fundamental attributes of God being immortality and impassibility, it followed that man in order to become one with God must practically cease to be man. Hence in spite of the ease with which Greek thought could conceive man's partaking in Deity, it nevertheless defined Deity in a way which made it exclusive of anything we should call real manhood. So in the end, as far as Greek philosophy went, the two natures in Christ were not merely distinguished, which was necessary, but separated, which was false to the Christian experience and fundamentally unorthodox.

From this grave limitation of Hellenism the traditional theology has never wholly escaped.

Probably it has its roots not only in the Greek idea of God, but in the whole character of ancient philosophy. The ancients thought in terms of ontology; being, substance, essence were their chief categories, and their aim in metaphysic was to reach a perfectly self-consistent object of knowledge, from which they could somehow derive the world. Now so long as we think of Godhead and manhood primarily as substances or objects of knowing, it is difficult to *distinguish* without *separating* them from each other. For ideas of substance and object are largely influenced by spatial associations, and it is a property of all bodies in space that they cannot interpenetrate. Thus the philosophy of substance is apt to break down when it is asked to conceive of one substance or nature permeating and acting through another from which it is distinct, though this is a phenomenon which we each one of us experience directly in our own psycho-physical life. If mediæval and modern theologians had only paid more attention to working out what the Athanasian Creed implies by the words "As the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ," many plausible attacks on the orthodox Christology would never have been uttered.

## III

Now the modern mind, just because it has discarded substance as an ultimate category, has

presented to itself the philosophic problem of Christology in a new form and has altered the emphasis in old difficulties. The subjective idealism originating from Descartes and Berkeley created a revolution which has left a permanent impression on human thought. It has enormously emphasised the importance of the part played by the human mind, the perceiving and knowing subject, in the construction of the whole system which we call knowledge, truth or reality. The view of knowledge as purely passive, as the mere reception and registering of an external reality, has been once for all abandoned. Knowledge has been proved to be both a selective and a harmonising activity which seeks and must seek to order its world into a coherent whole. It is further recognised, with varying degrees of reservation, that order and coherence can only exist and have meaning for a mind. It does not, of course, follow, as some extremists have seemed to suggest, that we create reality simply by an act of our knowledge or that our cognition makes out of nothing and projects into the world an order and coherence which have no existence except in our minds. But it does seem to follow that relation to and value for mind enter into the very stuff of anything we can call a real world, and that our mental activity is an essential factor in eliciting the order which such a real world must have.

Hence has taken place by slow but sure degrees

a very real change of emphasis in the philosophic idea of God's nature. In proportion as the element actively contributed to reality by human thinking and knowing has been emphasised, the tendency has become more and more manifest to conceive God, not as the great object of knowledge, but as Himself the great Thinker and Knower, the one Mind who knows and is active in and through ours. Instead of the one changeless eternal substance or subsistence, God becomes for our thought the universal omnipresent mental activity, by which our minds are completed and fulfilled, and under which they are subsumed. Without making any attempt to present accurately the position of any particular school of philosophy, it is possible to state broadly the general difference between the ancient point of view and the modern by saying that, whereas in ancient philosophy God is conceived primarily as a trans-objective substance, in modern philosophy God is conceived primarily as a trans-subjective activity.

The influence of this modern point of view is felt even by thinkers who could not be strictly classed as idealists. But certainly it is the starting-point of the idealistic philosophies of immanence. They conceive God primarily not as the *ens realissimum*, but as the perfect and complete mental activity or life whereof human minds are particular manifestations, centres, foci—call them what you will. The relation of the Divine Mind to human minds is variously worked out in detail, but God is essen-

tially the whole of mind and the Mind of the Whole, somehow present and operative in the particular minds we call our own. Hence the whole relation of Godhead to manhood is differently conceived. The union of God and man means no longer the uniting of a Being characterised by one definite attribute such as immortality, impassibility, or holiness, to another kind of being which is characterised by its opposite; it means primarily a problem in relating the universal to the particular mind or life. This is generally true of the different theologies which may be based on the philosophies of absolute idealism, neo-idealism or of the Bergsonian life-force.

Now from one point of view it is evident that these schools of modern thought have even less difficulty than the Greek in conceiving some sort of union between Godhead and manhood. The union is in a sense necessary to their very existence. There must be some unity between universal and particular, and if the Divine Mind or Life stands to the human in this relation at all, the unity is implied by the very nature of the terms. But it seems at first sight that the kind of union between God and man which is thus arrived at is no less fatal to the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation than the most rigid insistence on the separation of the two natures. For the union is necessitated by the very meaning of the terms themselves, and seems thus to exclude altogether the particular act of union through Jesus Christ on which

Christian faith has based itself. Indeed God and man seem to become so completely one that it is difficult to maintain at all the substantive reality of both kinds or modes of being. For it seems that the particulars taken collectively constitute the same reality which in its wholeness is the universal. And thus the whole real difference between God and man seems to be dissolving into a difference, as it were, of two points of view from which one reality may be regarded. What is human viewed *sub specie temporis* as a series of particulars, is Divine viewed *sub specie æternitatis* as an ideally complete whole. And when the being of the whole and that of the particulars are thought of in relation to each other, one kind of being is apt to become adjectival to the other. Either the particulars are adjectival to the whole or the whole to the particulars; either individual human souls are just qualifications of God, or Godhead is just a quality or ideal of individual human souls.

It is this whole manner of conceiving Godhead in relation to manhood which has determined the line taken by those modern schools of Christological thought which we have already discussed. Always their theology seems either to be resting upon, or trying ineffectually to escape, an implicit identification of Godhead and manhood which traditional orthodoxy cannot but reject as completely as it rejects the extremest deism. But it would surely be the most tragic of errors to assume

for that reason that modern thought has no characteristic contribution of its own to make to the elucidation of the central mystery of Christian experience. It may still be true that the breach between traditional orthodoxy and modern thought is due rather to want of sympathy and mutual understanding on the part of representatives of each, than to any fundamental contradiction between the two ways of thinking as such. If only orthodoxy would pay more penetrating attention to the essential truth signified and care less for the formula which expresses it, and if modern thought would not always take it for granted that the heresy of to-day is the orthodoxy of to-morrow, no matter what to-day's heresy may be, it might be found that even now modern thought is offering materials for a genuine re-interpretation of the very same truth for which the best orthodoxy has always contended.

Let us therefore examine the question more narrowly, how far modern ideas of the relation of God to man really need contradict the essential distinction drawn by orthodoxy between the Divine nature and the human. Here we touch the real centre of the philosophic problem of modern Christology. We have seen that modern thought is inclined to relate the Divine Mind or Life to the human as the universal to the particular. But we have yet to inquire what precise meaning it may attach to the idea of the universal.

It is a great merit of modern philosophy to have

made it plain that there are two different kinds of universality, two ways of conceiving a universal. Ancient thought very generally regarded the universal as practically the highest common factor of a number of particulars more or less like each other, which on account of that likeness are taken as forming a class. Thus universal manhood is that common quality or characteristic shared by all beings who are called men, universal life the characteristic which men have in common with all other living things, and so on. It is obvious that the widest and most universal of universals in this sense is the one with the most general and abstract meaning. The final universal, that of being, can mean practically nothing at all. Universals of this type are conveniently called abstract universals. They are reached by abstracting from the peculiarities and differences of particular things. They owe their existence to the fact that for purposes of generalisation we find it convenient to ignore such peculiarities; and therefore they cannot be said themselves to possess objective reality or existence. It has been made a criticism of Plato that his ideas are in reality no more than a false hypostatisation of such abstract class-universals.

But, as Dr. Bosanquet[1] and others have so clearly shown, this abstract universal is not the only or true type of universal at all. We may find or make a unity in things not by ignoring or remov-

[1] *The Principle of Individuality and Value*, Lecture II.

ing their differences, but by combining their differences to serve a common end, so that they become members each with its special place or function in some system or organism. The term universal may now be used to denote the nature of the whole system or organism which determines the special characteristics of each part or member and its relation to the rest. This type of universal is called concrete, and by it is meant that actual principle of unity which combines parts or members differing from one another into a systematic or organic whole. This universal must be as real as the parts themselves, for it is that which determines the parts and makes them what they are. The general difference between the two types of universal may be made plain by a rough illustration from a material object. Think of a watch which contains a number of wheels of different sizes and patterns. You bring the wheels under an abstract universal by leaving out all their differences and considering only the common characteristic of roundness in virtue of which you call them all wheels. Obviously there is no real wheel corresponding to this abstraction. You bring the wheels into a concrete universal by considering the relation of each to the whole unity of the watch which determines the shape of each and combines it with the others. This wholeness of the watch is as much a reality as any of its parts.

If, then, we are to use the relation of universal to particular as in any way helping us to conceive

the relation of God to human souls, we must first dismiss from our minds all thought of the merely abstract universal. Godhead is not to be conceived as just a common quality or characteristic possessed by all souls, or even all good souls. There must be, and there need be, no hint of abstractness about our idea of God, if we thus conceive His nature as a universality; nor any hint of reducing men to a uniformity which flattens out their differences.

But still we are confronted by the question, Do human souls, combined with other forms of being, together make up God, according to this modern way of thinking, in a sense like that in which a system is made up of its parts? To answer this question we must examine again the constitution of some of those actual systems from which our idea of the concrete universal is derived. There is the unity of the machine, the unity of the work of art, the unity of the living organism or body. All these are whole and defined systems consisting of material parts or members fitted together in a certain order and harmony, and determined by the nature of the whole to which they belong. But we notice this further feature, that always the whole of material parts is itself necessarily related to and determined by something which is beyond and of a nature different from and higher than itself. The machine and the work of art are in all their various forms products of the creative activity of human mind. The unity which is immanent in them and

determines their every part is only in them because it is bestowed upon them from without. Moreover, the source and end of their unity is not only outside them, but is definitely in a different nature and order of being from theirs. When we come to the system of an organism of body, the connection between the material whole and that which is of other and higher nature is still more intimate, but the distinction is none the less necessary and definite. The life even of a plant is more and other in nature than the mere sum of its material parts, yet it is that which determines the parts and makes their wholeness. Still more the mind or soul of a man is more and other than the sum of the members of his body, yet the body is constituted and determined through and through by its relation to the mind or soul of which it is at once the instrument and the limitation.

We conclude, then, that in one way or another the unity of every material system we know is determined by and dependent upon that which is of a nature essentially other and higher than material. The very systems we take as types and illustrations of the concrete universal radically involve duality of nature between the parts or members of the system and that which gives and constitutes its wholeness.

Now can we apply the principle of this conclusion by a sort of analogy to the relation between the Godhead itself and human souls? Might we say that as the true wholes of material parts only

exist as wholes in intimate relation to mind or life, which are themselves of a nature higher and other than material, so any true wholeness and concrete unity of human souls can be only in relation to that which is of a nature higher and other than human, called by man Divine? Is it true that as the organic unity of matter in relation to life or mind involves duality of nature between the physical and the psychic or mental, so the quasi-organic unity which may exist and ought to exist between all the centres of life and mind involves a duality of nature between what is at its highest human and what is Divine? The Godhead, then, would be the true universal in relation to human minds or souls, constituting and determining their nature through and through, in proportion as they realise their true organic unity in and for Godhead, but the Godhead would be no more constituted by human souls than a human mind is constituted by the limbs of its body, or an artist's vision by his paints and canvas.

Now in so far as modern thought may fairly be interpreted in this direction, it is evident that, speaking generally and in principle, it is not at all so necessarily hostile to orthodoxy as we have been tempted to assume. The characteristic vice of modern thought seemed to be that, while it brings the Divine Being into necessary union with the human, it tends to make the Incarnation impossible by abolishing all real and substantive difference between the Divine and human natures. To

express the same objection in more familiar language, modern thought seems to emphasise the immanence of the Godhead in man at the expense of its transcendence. Such seemed to be the result of conceiving God under the form of a universal mind or trans-subjective activity. But if we may interpret the idea of God's universality by the help of the analogy we have just sketched, the bad result seems by no means to follow—rather the distinction of the Divine nature from the human is emphasised at the same time as the two are brought into relation with one another. It was just precisely here that ancient thought always failed, because the differences it asserted between Godhead and manhood always tended to create an unbridgeable gulf between the two. According to this line of argument, however, distinction is emphasised the more separation is removed. Is it not possible that thus modern thought provides us with the material for a clearer and more satisfactory interpretation of the two-natures doctrine than the ancients possessed? And yet we shall have but been following out a little further the hint of the Athanasian Creed, that as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ.

## IV

We will, however, defer to the next lecture the further application of our analogical principle to the doctrine of Christ's Person. At present there

is need to illustrate and define its meaning rather further as a general way of conceiving the relation of Godhead to manhood.

(1) The general analogy we have been using (as human mind to matter, so God to human mind) is strikingly illustrated by one aspect of the philosophy of Plotinus,[1] which Dr. Inge brings out very clearly in his Gifford Lectures. Plotinus distinguishes three orders of being which in his system form the hierarchy of reality—(1) νοῦς or spirit, (2) ψυχὴ or natural life, (3) ὕλη which must be translated "matter," though Dr. Inge points out that the word is misleading. According to Plotinus each order of being occupies the place of ὕλη in relation to the one that is above. Just as that which is properly called ὕλη, viz. the lowest order, derives its form and character from its determination by ψυχή, so ψυχὴ itself derives its true form and character from its determination by νοῦς. Thus ψυχὴ may in a sense be called the ὕλη of νοῦς. If we put Godhead for νοῦς, and natural humanity for ψυχή, Plotinus's system seems to stand for the same general idea of the relation of Godhead to manhood as that which we have been suggesting. But there is one important difference. Plotinus speaks of a real unity of ψυχὴ at its own level. He compounds the different centres of ψυχὴ into one great World-Soul, which he takes to be as real a unity as the particular centres. Our suggestion has been that the real concrete unity or

[1] I cannot claim to have studied Plotinus in the original.

wholeness of each order or nature of being is constituted by the ingression into it of the higher order; so that human souls and centres of natural life cannot form a real whole except by being transfused and determined throughout by the transcendent and immanent Godhead.

(2) An appeal to general religious experience may help further to define and justify our main position. It is immediately obvious that in one form or another the analogy "as man to matter, so God to man" is in all religion, as soon as it rises above mere animism, the commonest method whereby man seeks to express God's greatness in relation to himself. It underlies every conception which man forms of the Divine Creator and of Divine purpose in the world. But since the analogy is often used in an anthropomorphic way, it is necessary to point out that in its true form it is essentially not anthropomorphic. Anthropomorphism comes in the moment we pass from the idea that God is related to man as man to matter to the idea that God may be thought of as generally man-like. So an unwary disciple of Plotinus, finding his master call ψυχὴ the ὕλη of νοῦς, might slip unawares into thinking of ψυχὴ as generally like ὕλη. Another instance of the same fallacy comes to my mind. I once read a paper to a conference in which I suggested that our waking experience might be related to the experience of the next world as our dreams are related to our waking experience. The discussion had not gone far

before a critic accused me of having said that our waking experience was a mere dream. In using, as in criticising, a three-term analogy, it is often easy to slip into identifying the middle term with one of the others. But the identification plainly destroys the nature of the analogy. In so far, then, as our analogy is real, it is not anthropomorphic, though no doubt this very fact calls attention to its limitations. Because God differs radically from man, and man from matter, the relations between Godhead and manhood and those between manhood and matter cannot, of course, be the same. The analogy only suggests a dim similarity of relationship which may help our human ignorance in conceiving God. When all this has been allowed for, we may point to the fact that it is to this analogy that the human mind instinctively turns when it would give some account of its highest spiritual experience. It is the Christian mystic's highest ambition "to be to the Eternal Goodness what his right hand is to a man."

(3) In illustrating our conception of Godhead as constituting the true unity and wholeness of souls or centres of life, a very important class of facts is that which shows the connection between God-consciousness and group-consciousness in human history. It is a commonplace to say that in primitive times religion was part of the life of the tribe or social community; gods were tribal deities, their very names were often used as loose

personifications of the group. Jehovah stood for Israel, Chemosh for Moab. Each tribe was literally called by the name of its god. As tribes coalesced, and their group-lives were fused, polytheism naturally succeeded to monolatry, and, in further development, monotheism is inextricably bound up with some sense of the solidarity and common destiny of mankind, even if that sense is chiefly shown in wars of religious persecution. In Christianity specifically we find the intense intimacy of connection already noticed between love of God and love of brother-men, and that peculiarly close relation of the Divine Christ to the Christian group which is expressed in St. Paul's parable of the body and members, and St. John's of the vine and branches.

It is on facts of this kind that some psychologists and others base their argument that what men call God and Deity is in reality nothing more than a human group-mind or spirit of the race, which appears as other than human because the survival and advance of the race requires the rigid subordination and often the complete self-sacrifice of the individual. Without attempting to discuss this theory in detail we may perhaps point out wherein our manner of interpreting religious experience does fuller justice to these same facts. The obvious weakness of the race-spirit theory is that it is more applicable to the lower than to the higher forms of religion. It may be easy enough to identify the deities of primitive tribes or of heathen

state religions with personifications of race-spirit (when they do not rather personify forces of nature), but this only serves to make the contrast of such religions with Christianity the more conspicuous. For a race-spirit as such in relation to individual lives is a mere collectivity or aggregation. In that precisely it differs in type from all forms of organic unity, which, as we have seen, involve the determination of a lower nature by a higher. Yet it is to types of organic unity, the body and the vine, that the great apostles turn in order to give some account of the experience of Christianity. By that very fact they express their sense that the group-spirit of Christianity had its source in something more than the mere spirit of the group or of any collectivity of human souls—their group-consciousness was what it was because the whole group and its members were thoroughly determined by a being of another nature, as organic matter is always determined by something other than material. The Christians, of course, may have been wrong. All I am now suggesting is that they were fundamentally and utterly wrong if the race-spirit theory of Godhead is right. And it is *pro tanto* a weakness in that theory that it has to pronounce such a high type of religious experience delusive. One sometimes wonders whether the inadequacy of the race-spirit or group-spirit hypothesis is not further demonstrated by the persistent failure of the Christian Church as soon as it identifies itself with any kind

of national group. Whatever else the religious history of the last three centuries has shown, it has at least demonstrated the abject futility of merely national Churches, and we may add that the Papal State of the Ultramontanes has done no better. The Church stands for a higher principle of association than the group or the race, and when it fails to be true to that principle it is a mere encumbrance to progress.

We leave to the next lecture the attempt to apply to the particular problem of Christian experience and Christology the conception of Godhead as transcending and yet constituting the highest association of human souls. The task of this lecture has been to show that modern thought, which superficially is so hostile to orthodoxy, really does nevertheless suggest a point of view from which we may regard the Divine and human natures as distinct without being separate. If this is so, modern thought supplies a lack which centuries of Christian theology have felt.

## VI. GOD AND MAN IN JESUS CHRIST

In the last lecture we suggested that speaking in terms of modern thought we might start from a definition of Godhead as that Supreme Being or Reality which gives true unity and wholeness to the world, and more especially to man as that member of the world-system with which we are immediately concerned. Thus we start from Godhead in relation to manhood but yet distinguished from it. What we mean by God's nature as distinct from man's nature is primarily a nature towards which we are related in some sort of manner analogous to that in which a machine or work of art stands to its human maker, or a human body to the mind. The human soul at its best and highest, especially in Christianity, feels itself to exist for and in a Being of higher nature, which is above it and yet penetrates it, and is especially concerned with its relation to other souls. So Godhead is distinct from manhood but not separated, at least in ideal. We might perhaps best express this fundamental idea of the relation of God's nature to man's by speaking of the Godhead not as superhuman or supernatural, but as transhuman. Thus we try to express our sense of the truth that God transcends

us infinitely and yet acts through us, lives in us, and is the principle of our unity.

But what then shall we say as to any characteristic content of this nature of Godhead? The bare concept of unity, universality or wholeness, is singularly unsatisfying, and leads to the very abstraction we have been trying to avoid. Those who praise the concrete universal do not always remember that there is no more dangerous abstraction than the concept of mere concreteness. The Jew would have answered our question as to the essential content of God's nature by saying "holiness," the Greek by saying "immortality" or "changelessness." The Christian answer is "love." But we have still to relate this answer to our general conception of the two natures, before we can apply our conclusions to the interpretation of Christ's Person.

Let us turn our attention again to those wholes of material parts to which human mind gives systematic unity. We find that the mind expresses itself and exerts its true power not so much or not at all in the creation of each several part of the system as such, but in establishing a certain relation of the parts to one another. In a machine, as in any work of art, the idea or vision of the whole comes first to the mind, and is then expressed or carried out in a material medium, in which each several part is wholly determined and characterised by its relation to the others and to the whole. A separate fragment of a machine is

meaningless, no expression of mind at all, apart from some clue as to the nature of the whole to which it truly belongs. The same may be said of a fragment torn from a work of art. The meaning resides in the whole and in the particular relation of the parts to each other. Moreover, in the case of material parts of such wholes as these, there is no one definite quality possessed by all and each of the parts as they are in the whole, and lost by any part which is separated. The relation of the parts in the whole is a certain harmony or proportion, and that harmony or proportion is certainly external to each part taken severally. Take a wheel from a machine, or an arm from a statue. The wheel and the arm themselves undergo no change. Put them back in position and the whole is restored. The whole is constituted by the relative position of the parts. But the case of a living body is somewhat different. The life which determines the whole, and which the whole body serves, actually enters into every part of it, and appears also as something which belongs to each, as well as knitting them all into a unity. An arm amputated from a living body is no longer the same in itself. It is a dead arm, not a living one, and merely to put it back in position will not restore life to the arm or wholeness to the body. Yet this life, which appears in the limbs as a certain definite property or quality of their material nature, is not in itself or in its source material; it belongs to a higher

order of being, which, when it comes to self-consciousness, we call psychic or mental.

Now in the doctrine of the New Testament, love or *agape* makes just the same sort of difference to human life that life itself makes to matter. That is to say, *agape* gives to humanity a new property or quality which is yet more than a property or quality of itself, because it signifies its penetration and determination by something higher. Humanity full of *agape* stands to natural or psychic humanity just as organic matter stands to inorganic; it is full of a new life and a new order of being, not its own, which is determining it for a higher end. Thus naturally and inevitably *agape* stands in the New Testament (1) for the Divine nature itself above man, (2) for that which binds human souls together into unity, and (3) for a certain quality which all souls in fellowship with God must possess. In one passage we are told that God is love, in another that the body of Christ's Church builds itself up in love, and in a third that love is the one and only indispensable gift which every single Christian soul must have. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."

And yet in the New Testament Godhead is never once confused with ideal manhood, the two natures are kept perfectly distinct. For love, not of course excluding the knowledge which love brings, is in all experience the principle which

overcomes separation without abolishing distinction. And this has always been supremely true of the life of Christian fellowship with God and men. In the ideal fellowship or partnership between two human souls in Christ there is no separation; the two characters supply each other, and even interpenetrate each other, in proportion as the union is close; but each person remains himself and not the other; the individuality gives itself, but is not lost, is transfused by another, but not submerged. Of the Christian's fellowship with God it is also true that, in the ideal, God's Presence wholly penetrates and determines the soul, without making it other than itself, without destroying the distinction which makes it personal. But none the less a Christian's fellowship with his brethren is different in kind from his fellowship with God. For the latter fellowship makes and includes the former. The Christian is in love with his brethren because he is in love with God, and in loving his brethren he loves God also. God, therefore, is not simply another person, one more source and object of love in addition to others. He is the one ultimate source and object of all love, truly present wherever love is manifest. But this is already to affirm that God differs in nature from man. Fellowship of man with man demands a personal distinction of one man from another, fellowship of man with God demands another distinction as well, a distinction of nature. But this additional

distinction, so far from creating any separation between man and God, is precisely constituted by the fact that God as the true universal love is nearer to every man than is his own neighbour.

Thus the New Testament doctrine of God as *agape* supports very exactly that conception of Godhead which we have been trying to outline. For *agape* is that property of, and relation between, the particular members, which manifests the higher nature of that which constitutes the whole, and yet is experienced as infinitely above even the whole. It is the Christian community or communion which realises this wholeness in its highest degree, and therefore affords the ground for calling Jesus Christ God. By predicating Deity of Jesus Christ we mean essentially that He is identified with that living fount and source of *agape* for which and through which and in which the unity of man and of his world is brought about and consists. Nowhere is the Godhead of Jesus Christ more definitely declared than in the words, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them," or again, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me." Thus we allow no separation between God's nature and man's, save for the sin and imperfection of manhood. In so far as man realises his true nature and is what he ought to be, he is by that very fact in God and for God through Christ, and God through Christ is in him. But neither do we confuse or destroy

the distinction between Godhead and manhood, since Christ as God is identified with the end and author and agent of man's unity, and is therefore something infinitely more than man.

Now if we are to reinterpret along these lines the Chalcedonian doctrine of our Lord's Person, we must first distinguish carefully and bear constantly in mind two senses of the term *incarnation* as expressing the union of God with man.

(1) In one sense the Eternal Word of God begins to incarnate Himself in manhood as soon as any plurality of human beings begin to love and serve and sacrifice themselves one for another. By so doing they become transfused with the Divine Life and Love. They feel that Life and Love dimly stirring in them, and, if they be not confused by a false philosophy or science, they will regard their life and love as having a transcendent source and end towards which they must take the attitude of prayer and worship. In this sense again the Divine Word is finally incarnate in that perfect communion of all souls knit together in love, of which the New Testament speaks frequently, and most definitely in that famous passage of the Ephesians which prophesies of our altogether coming unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the completion of the Christ. It is the pledge of that glorious consummation that a human spirit cannot truly begin to love and serve another without feeling itself somehow in harmony and in touch with a spiritual reality more and other

than its own life and the life of the one it loves. All true human fellowship is in a special sense the organ of God's self-expression and activity, and in this sense we may speak of a universal incarnation of God in manhood without any implication of positivism, pantheism, or mere idealistic humanism.

(2) But this does not exhaust the significance of the Divine Incarnation, nor is this the only meaning we give to the term. Looking at history we see that this consciousness of God in and through human fellowship sprang in its explicit fulness from the life and death of one man, Jesus Christ, and we find in the records concerning that man certain facts, very credibly supported, which seem to show that this really epoch-making consequence of His life was no mere chance or coincidence, but the actual result of what He was and did and became. The underlying purpose of the whole theology which led to Chalcedon was to interpret this one personality as the great efficient cause through which the universal mystical incarnation of Godhead in manhood is continually in history being wrought and perfected. The whole fellowship of man in God and with God is through Jesus Christ. This is the ultimate fact of Christian experience, and therefore theologians are constrained to affirm that the two distinct natures, which are being brought into full universal union in all the spiritual growth of humanity, are in Him perfectly united. No range of human

spiritual progress can ever go beyond that law of union with God through the self-sacrifice of love, which God once for all in Jesus Christ perfectly manifested and exemplified by His own act.

The central problem of Christology, therefore, now as of old, is to relate in intelligible terms the universal to this particular indwelling of God in man, or, in other words, the mystical to the historic Incarnation of the Christ. Modern thought itself has led us to visualise the problem more explicitly in these terms. I would now attempt very briefly and hesitatingly to indicate the lines along which modern thought might search for a substantially orthodox solution. We must remember that analogy from our own nature at its best may be a poor clue to the Godhead, but it is the only one we have. Our justification for using it is fundamentally the religious experience which bids us believe that our own nature at its best is already penetrated by another and a higher one revealing itself through ours, even while it remains in itself unutterably different.

It is characteristic of the human mind or soul at its fullest and greatest to be capable in an indefinite degree of concentration in expressing itself through written word or act. Tennyson speaks of all the charm of all the Muses flowering in a single word, and, though the statement even in reference to Vergil is something of a hyperbole, it contains an important truth. The whole fulness of a poetic genius, which the thoughts and

aspirations of a whole age have helped to form, may be immanent in two or three stanzas which can be recited in a minute. And the same is true of single moments of action. A great military commander may put a whole lifetime of experience and a whole system of thought and training into a few decisive orders and dispositions which decide the fate of a campaign. A statesman may infuse into a few sentences spoken at a critical moment the whole greatness of a character and a knowledge which his whole personality has built up and an infinite number of outside influences have moulded. And, as a general rule, it is true that the greater the man, the greater his economy of speech and action. The great man says and does just enough and no more; he wastes nothing. At critical moments his whole self goes into what he says or does, and he needs to repeat himself less than other men. There is a certain "once-for-all-ness" about all great deeds or words or works of art. And such words or works we call supremely characteristic of their authors, meaning that they concentrate and epitomise a whole man in a moment of self-expressive action.

Again, recent research in social psychology seems to be teaching us that the difference between civilised and primitive peoples, between progressive and unprogressive races, depends not on any perceptible difference between the average man of one race and the average man of another, but upon the appearance in certain races or peoples

of a few geniuses whose work is decisive in modifying the whole culture of the race to which they belong.[1] And the characteristic of the mind of genius is that it concentrates and focuses in critical action at one point the partial discoveries and endeavours and aspirations of whole generations of men. It is as if thoughts and knowledges, gradually won in wide diffusion in a multitude of minds, had to be concentrated in a single personality and focused at a particular point, before they can be made really effective in visible progress.

Now can we bring these two lines of thought together in order to interpret to ourselves somewhat more clearly the person of Jesus Christ in its identity with the Eternal Word of God? Many who seem to be far from orthodox Christianity would willingly admit that Jesus is the supreme religious genius Who, by His teaching of love of God and neighbour and of the Kingdom founded through self-sacrifice, focused in His single mind and life the religious aspirations of all mankind. But, while we acknowledge the truth of this thought, we must go beyond it, if we would speak of Jesus Christ as being in very deed God incarnate. We have argued that the Godhead itself is specially expressed and specially active in all love and service whereby men enter into the true union of fellowship with one another. Are we not now very near to essential orthodoxy, if we may further say that God in relation to man has

[1] My authority here is W. MacDougall, *The Group-Mind*, Chap. IX.

accomplished once for all His supremely characteristic, concentrated and effective act in the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ? Not only does Jesus focus in Himself the religious aspirations of mankind, He must also be supremely and uniquely identified with that whole activity of God towards man, to fulfil which is the highest goal of human life. For just as the characteristic act or speech may stand for and express the whole continuous personality of a man, so the man Jesus Christ stands for and expresses once for all the whole of Godhead in its manward relation. The final mystical incarnation of Christ in the perfect fellowship of souls does no more than interpret and fulfil and expand the life of Jesus Christ, through which it is accomplished. It is the same Christ-God Who is embodied in both Incarnations, and is continuously active to accomplish the final and universal Incarnation by means of the operation once for all made manifest in the historic and particular.

Thus, looking at the historic Jesus Christ, we affirm both that He is the pattern to men of that human, yet more than human, *agape*, which brings men into the fellowship of God, and also that He is the great characteristic act-in-manhood of the Divine Fount of *agape* Itself. That surely is the great double truth that the formula of Chalcedon has been meant to preserve—that we should both follow Jesus as our pattern, and also see and feel in His historic life and its consequences

the act of God upon and for us, so that we must identify Him with the Godhead which we worship.

To be candid, however, we must immediately admit a certain departure from traditional ways of thought, and face the formidable difficulty which the orthodox must feel in assenting to any line of interpretation such as we propose. On the whole tradition has tended to regard the historic Incarnation as the taking upon Himself by the Eternal Word of a human nature from which He had previously been separate and alien, and it has thought of the human nature so assumed as a generalised humanity not individualised in any human personality. On the other hand, we have been trying to present the historic Incarnation rather as the concentration of the whole manward activity of the Eternal Word at a particular point in a particular act, and we have stigmatised as abstract and unreal any generalised and non-individual humanity, so that to save the reality of our Lord's manhood we are constrained to think of Him as an individual man. The first difficulty as to the previous alienation of manhood from the Divine Logos is probably not in itself serious. For we can all agree that the only alienation of man from God consists in the sin and imperfection of man, that in all human history the Godhead has been going forth into man to raise him into fellowship with God, and that the historic Incarnation marks, as it were, both the actual crisis and the supreme revelation of

God's whole manward activity. But when we combine our thought of the concentration of the Divine activity with insistence on the individuality of the manhood of Jesus, we lay ourselves open to a much more threatening attack. "After all," it will be said, "you have only fallen back in the end into the modernist heresy which declares that the Divinity of Jesus Christ differs from our own in degree only, not in kind. You insist on the distinction of two natures in Him, but you distinguish them in us as well. God acted through Jesus, but He also acts through us. So after all the only difference between Jesus and us is this, that He was a man more transparent, more utterly submissive, to the Divine activity than we are—in other words, He differs from us in the end only in being a better man."

This objection is serious and fundamental, and I have felt it so acutely that it has almost led me to abandon this whole method of presenting the Incarnation. Yet after a good deal of thought I do not admit that the objection does justice to the point of view we are trying to take. If we are to think of the historic Incarnation, under a figure, as the supremely characteristic act of a Divine transhuman Mind and Person, we must allow full value to our image, inadequate as it must be.

A really characteristic act of any great personality has two sides or aspects: it is both characteristic and an act, it is both revealing and effective, it both shows the character of the person and does

something which the person willed to do. So the life of Jesus Christ has for us these two aspects in relation to God. It is both the ἀπαύγασμα and the χαρακτὴρ [1] of the Godhead. It reveals supremely what God is, but that is not all; it also accomplishes supremely what God wills to do in relation to manhood. Now you cannot consider the nature of an act or compare it with other acts except by considering what it actually effects and does. So in determining the relation of Jesus to other men, the important question for us is not merely, In what degree did Jesus reveal God? but also, What actually did God accomplish through Jesus? If God through Jesus has accomplished something different in kind from what He has accomplished through any other man, we have a perfect right, nay we are bound, to say that Jesus, though truly a man, is yet also truly different in kind from all other men.

Moreover, the question, What has God accomplished through Jesus?, cannot be answered by any limitation of the data to the bare record of the synoptic Gospels. The true and full personality of Jesus Christ must include all that He ever was and has ever become, and nothing in the New Testament is clearer than that the events recorded in the synoptic Gospels are intended to be taken only as one chapter of the life of Jesus Christ. The point of the New Testament story as a whole is to show us how through His death and resur-

[1] Heb. I. 3. χαρακτὴρ = impress, R. V. margin.

rection and ascension, followed by the coming of the Spirit, Jesus Christ came to stand in such permanent relation to the society of Christians that they were compelled in their thoughts and prayers to assign to Him just that position which we have defined as distinctive of Deity. It is Jesus Christ born on earth, crucified, risen, ascended and returning through the Spirit, not any one isolated part or phase or aspect of that Personality and Life, Whom the Church affirms to be God. The truest nature of a thing is its fullest development, and in so far as our Lord as touching His earthly manhood developed up to the time of His passing into the unseen, the same law applies even to Him. It is an essentially impossible task to find the full Deity in Jesus Christ known *only* after the flesh, *i. e.* as a historic figure.

If we accept the main record of the New Testament, God in Jesus Christ gave to men a pattern of perfect sinless manhood, which for that reason revealed and reflected Deity in a supreme degree. But God did much more than this. In the society of Jesus Christ's followers He created a new consciousness of fellowship of men with God and one another, of which fellowship Jesus Christ Himself was the Head and Source, and the love which flowed from Christ the bond. It is this aspect in particular of God's work through Christ which compels us to call Christ very God of one substance with the Father. This work of Christ for man was throughout God's work, not man's,

and its result is the experience of the Christian fellowship in which Christ holds the place of God. Therefore while we admit the full individual manhood of Jesus, we must still insist that His true and fundamental Person is fully Divine. We must judge what was latent in the days of His flesh by what became patent only through the resurrection and ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

This leaves us with an unsolved problem as to the nature of our Lord's self-consciousness in the days of His flesh. It is a psychological rather than a strictly theological or philosophical problem, and I cannot at this stage embark on any discussion of it, even were I competent to make the attempt. I may, however, perhaps be allowed to make one comment, which I think is important in determining the right line of approach. There is no reason why we should identify the real personality of any man with the ego [1] or form of individual self-consciousness, which is after all an abstraction of his own mind. The personality is not this bare consciousness of "I"-hood which a man's thoughts abstract from their own content; still less is it an identical substratum underlying and untouched by all the man's change and growth. Rather it is that concrete wholeness of being and character into which all his right thoughts and

[1] I use the term ego here of the "I" of which a man is psychologically conscious, not of the fundamental metaphysical ground of the unity of his person. This may be an abuse of the term.

acts are moulding the man, the wholeness which his self-consciousness limits and often mars, and which no man on this side of death fully and finally achieves. The final whole is truly immanent in and throughout the growth, it is what the man truly is; but assuredly it is not as a whole present to his developing consciousness; to none of us does it yet appear what we shall be, and therefore ultimately are. Now suppose that the only real and ultimate Personality of Jesus is God. We need not deny that the Divine Person might have been the true personality of one Who in His human growth was limited by the form of an individual self-consciousness and human " I "-hood; yet in that case the human ego could not have been fully conscious, as it grew, of the whole nature of the Person which ultimately it was. The full Godhead would have been present in the manhood, yet not fully present to the consciousness of the man. This means that in the mind of our Lord on earth there would constantly have been a certain tension between the limitation imposed by His human self-consciousness, and the Deity, by which His human individuality was being taken up, and into which it was under conditions of space and time truly developing. Our Lord as a man would have been in an indefinable degree conscious that He was yet more than man; and this consciousness and the tension produced by it would have become clearer and more definite as His human individuality

grew. It is something of this kind which the synoptic narratives *prima facie* suggest.

Let us in conclusion try to see how the whole point of view which we have been engaged in defining would help us to combine together, or at least allow for, the distinctive values of those different types of thought which we have so far discussed in isolation.

(1) There is the insistence of Liberal Protestantism on the man Jesus as the supreme example and teacher of men in religion. This is an essential value, too often ignored by mediævalism, and we have tried to do justice to it by regarding the life of Jesus as the one and only supremely representative instance and example of a Divine activity always from the beginning operating in men and through men and moulding them into Christ-likeness. The teaching and life of the historic Jesus remain unchanged through time as the one standard of perfect manhood and the one test by which God's operation in man is discerned.

(2) There is the opposed emphasis of Evolutionary Modernism on the Divine Christ as standing for the genius of man's history or mankind in ideal. We have tried to do justice to this by arguing that the Divine Logos is essentially the true Unity and Unifier of all human souls, lives and activities, and is especially revealed in that love wherein they are made one. Moreover, in regarding the life of Jesus as the great characteristic act of the Divine *agape*, which is universally

working and fulfilling itself in all history, we have implied that even the life of Jesus is not to be isolated from its historic antecedents and consequences. We welcome the preparation of Jewish and heathen religions as well as the development of Catholic Christology as all tending to put the life of Jesus in its true context and to elicit its full meaning. We believe in starting from the Catholic principle of affirmation and acceptance, rather than from the Protestant principle of rejection and denial, and we find a real value in historic development.

(3) There is the traditional doctrine of two natures and two worlds, traditionally expressed partly in the language of Platonism and partly in that of primitive supernaturalism. One essential value of this doctrine lies in its vision of the truth that man only realises his true function and being when he exists in and for a goodness not his own, but flowing out from a being of an altogether higher nature than his. We have tried to allow for this by accepting the principle that no lower nature or order of being can be systematically unified, as it were, at its own level, and in its own power. As the psychic nature systematises, organises and goes out into that which is physical and material, and yet remains other and higher than it, so we suggest that the Divine nature organises and goes out into that which is merely human and makes it truly and organically one with itself and with the world, while yet

the Divine remains wholly distinct from the human.

Further, we have suggested that the Cross marks in Christian thought the bridge between a lower and a higher world of experience. The principle of dying to live is manifested not only as a law of spiritual progress in this world—as Caird so clearly saw and taught—it also marks the fact that the self-sacrifice of the whole personality, which cannot be complete apart from physical death, is a necessary condition of that full and whole understanding of reality which is the goal of philosophic aspiration. If Christian faith is to stand, ultimate solutions of the problem of life must be put off to the beyond. It is for this reason that time for the Christian must remain an element in ultimate reality. Human souls, to be perfected, must spend and lose their lives for the hope that is set before them, with no more than an unproved and indefinable faith in an incomprehensible perfection which lies beyond the immediate certainty of death. The time-experience of unsatisfying succession is an absolutely necessary condition of such self-sacrifice as that, and if the self-sacrifice is real and necessary, so is also the time-experience which makes it possible. On the other hand, if there is no real other world, to which this whole life of time and sacrifice is but the threshold, this life stands convicted of fundamental irrationality, and Gautama, not Christ, is the true prophet.

This doctrine of two worlds is an absolutely vital and characteristic value of traditionalism, which we have striven to preserve against all the modern methods that lead us along different roads to monistic simplification. All views which tend to reduce the difference of worlds to a difference merely of space, merely of time, or merely of thought, are equally false. Primitive supernaturalism made the difference merely one of space. The gods were man-like beings with homes somewhere above the sky. Modern evolutionism often makes the difference merely one of time. Heaven is simply a blissful state to which future generations of men will attain by "progress." Philosophic monism makes the difference merely one of thought. There is no other world except a more inclusive point of view from which the events and being of this world may be regarded —there is no real beyond. We have tried to follow tradition in presenting the doctrine of Cross and Resurrection as the law of that divinely ordained process whereby man attains to another order and plane of being in which the Divine Spirit of love, manifested on earth in self-sacrifice, is because of that sacrifice fulfilled in an eternal fellowship of souls in God.

(4) Finally, this law of the union of man in God and with God finds not only its supreme revealer, but its sacramental embodiment and its effective agent, in Jesus Christ as at once the Prophet, the Herald and the crucified and risen Head of the

Christian fellowship on earth and in the beyond. Thus we try to be loyal to the experience of the New Testament, on which the Chalcedonian and all true Christology is founded. In a sense the Divine Logos limits Himself to enter the time-experience of earth in all the acts and lives of human self-sacrifice for love and truth, which He alone inspires. He is present alike in the tenderness of a deutero-Isaiah or a St. Francis, and in the splendid intellectual courage of a Socrates or a Darwin. But in Jesus the Divine Logos is not only manifest supremely, but He has accomplished once for all something of a kind which never was before and can never be repeated. He made Himself, His own Person, the Head and Unity of a concrete fellowship of souls in which the whole law of human salvation is finally known and His whole power is made available to faith, until through death faith passes into sight. We can never get beyond learning Christ and entering together into Christ according to the truth, the example and the power, that are in Jesus alone. Therefore we say of Him in a quite special and unique sense, yet without isolating Him from any other in whom God has shown His glory, that He is the Son of God Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven. That is what we try to re-express in an inadequate figure, by saying that the life of Jesus is the supremely characteristic act of the universal activity of God in manhood.

A few more words as epilogue. Such usefulness as our discussion may possess does not assuredly lie in any new theory put forward, or new arguments urged, but in the somewhat clearer definition of the main values which it is the duty of a modern Christology to preserve and to re-emphasise. The danger of modern thinking in religion is its over-preoccupation with the analytic aspect of the truth. Different members and elements of the body of Christian faith have been first distinguished, then separated, then worked out each in isolation from the others. And now when the time for synthesis is come, each school of thought tries to put its own particular aspect of the truth for the whole, with the result that each seems irreconcilable with the rest. So we find Liberalism, Modernism, and Traditionalism, and often subdivisions of these schools, each claiming to be the sole representative of the essence of the Christian faith; and Christianity itself is nearly always identified with one or other of these types in the minds of those who can present a reasoned case either for or against its truth. The supreme need is for a radical Catholicism which will reject only the sectarianism of the schools, and endeavour to harmonise in affirmation all the values which their partial studies have elicited.

At present we seem to have reached the first stages of a controversy about the fundamentals of the faith, which bids fair to shake the fabric of the Church to its foundations. The critical work

on the documents is in the main issues complete. The historical problem of the Bible must give way to the doctrinal problem of the Creeds as the centre of gravity in Christian thought. The outlook is grave and in certain directions really disquieting. But there is no reason why we should not be full of hope if we take our stand on a thoroughgoing and sympathetic Catholicism, and in its spirit conduct our inquiries. For then we can fearlessly ally ourselves with the great principle which the best modern thought and much Evolutionary Modernism so clearly emphasises, that the true essence of anything is its concrete wholeness, not any abstract substratum or supposed kernel reached by successive strippings of an external integument. If we hold to this principle we need have no fear of being left with any reduced or residual Christianity such as Modernism too often appears to offer. Origin and tradition must make their full contributions to the whole no less than the latest discoveries of the contemporary mind. And having taken our stand on this fundamental Catholicism we can then admit also the principle of Protestantism as a subordinate element which we are bound to preserve. For all Christianity teaches us that its wholeness is not reached by any easy-going acceptance of things as they are, but only through a discipline which involves the severest forms of renunciation. The union of Catholicism and Protestantism can only be found in the religion of the Resurrection through the

Cross, and that again is the religion of Him Who died on Calvary and rose again to give His Spirit to His Church. We must be loyal to the sacramental gospel of the resurrection. There is not, nor ever can be, any other hope for mankind.

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